

THE GREAT
HIGHWAY.



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The Return

THE GREAT HIGHWAY:

A STORY OF THE WORLD'S STRUGGLES.

BY S. W. FULLOM,

AUTHOR OF "THE MARVELS OF SCIENCE," &C. &C.

With Illustrations on Steel,

BY JOHN LEECH,

"There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE GREAT HIGHWAY.

CHAPTER I.

A WEAK INVENTION OF THE ENEMY.

IT is time that we should return to Glynnellan, to glance for a moment at the events which followed Ernest's departure, more than twelve months previous to those detailed in our last chapter.

With all his caution, he had not quitted his uncle's house unobserved. There was one under the same roof who, though he could not appreciate, well understood his character, and, in the present conjuncture, watched him with sleepless vigilance.

Wordley Glynn felt that the moment was as big with peril to himself as to his cousin. If it were once seen that the toils spread around Ernest had been laid by his hand—that the bad impression produced on Mr. Glynn's mind had emanated from him, then it would be himself, not Ernest, who would be disgraced, and all his plottings would only have brought about his own downfall. What he most dreaded, therefore, was investigation; and it might happen that Mr. Glynn would cool by the morning, and allow Ernest an opportunity of establishing his innocence. Wordley's joy, then, may be imagined, when, himself unseen, he was a spectator of his stealthy departure, which not only averted such a contingency, but would render Mr. Glynn's estrangement from him more decided.

The point now was to give this effect permanence—to prevent any compunctious

revival of affection, when anger and resentment had subsided. In such a revulsion of feeling all his work might be undone, and, as the prime mover of Ernest's dismissal, he would become an object of aversion to Mr. Glynn, who, in his spleen, might proceed to the harshest measures against him. But, to secure impunity, what more easy, while the affair was yet fresh, than to blacken Ernest's character still further, and so render his uncle inexorable? It was a sure way of effecting his ends, and he resolved to put it in practice.

Other schemes, connected indirectly with the same object, had been maturing in his mind, and now seemed easy of accomplishment. Men who succeed by crooked means, haunted by the remembrance of their own perfidy, are always apprehending a similar policy in others, and, like Cromwell, see an assassin in

every shadow. Wordley Glynn was not content with having brought about the ruin of his cousin: he resolved to banish also Farmer Clinton and Jessie, since the latter, under the infatuation of her romantic attachment, might remain in communication with Ernest, and keep him informed of all that occurred at Glynnellan. She might even be employed, at some future time, to convey messages from him to Mr. Glynn, and thus pave the way for a reconciliation. In any case, it was desirable, after the manner in which she had been implicated, to remove both her and her father from the neighbourhood, and circumstances were highly favourable to this design, as Clinton's lease had just expired, and he could now exert his influence to prevent its being renewed.

There was indeed one bar to the eviction of the Clintons, which might have had some weight with a less daring

schemer; and that, as may be imagined, was the interest felt for them by Frost. Nor did this fail to receive consideration from Wordley, but, instead of shaking, it only confirmed his intentions, as he saw more danger in caressing the bailiff than in setting him at defiance. Frost knew that he had been made use of, and, in the overbearing insolence of his nature, already began to assume an air of independence, forgetting that, while he had eagerly accepted his services, Wordley had never, by any overt act, placed himself in his power. He was now to share the fate usually awarded to those who barter their honesty for a mess of pottage, and abjectly lend themselves to the base ends of others: the first act of a murderer, when he has consummated his crime, is to throw away his knife.

On the eventful morning of Ernest's departure, Mr. Glynn did not appear in

his sitting-room till much later than usual, and even then, still showed, in his flushed cheek and angry eye, unequivocal traces of the agitation and excitement of the preceding day.

“I don’t know who it is comes into my room at night,” he said snappishly, as Wordley presented himself, “or what business they have there, but I wish they’d keep out. This morning my things are all scattered over the room, and I can’t find my purse.”

“This is very strange,” remarked Wordley. “My purse, too, is missing. I thought I might have mislaid it, but if you have had a similar loss, some of the servants must be dishonest. Have you questioned your valet, sir? I really think you ought to inquire into it.”

“And, of course, I shall. It is my duty, as a magistrate, to do so. I don’t want to be instructed by you.”

“Certainly not, I merely ventured to suggest—”

“You’re too ready with your suggestions. But I have something else to think of this morning. Send some one for my other dutiful nephew, will you?”

“I am sorry to say Ernest has left the house, sir.”

“Left the house!” said Mr. Glynn, turning sharply round, and fixing a searching look on the other’s face. “What do you mean?”

“He appears to have gone, sir. He was seen this morning soon after daybreak, about five miles off, by one of the game-keepers, and had a carpet-bag slung over his shoulders—from which I conclude he is not coming back.”

“Let him go!”—let him go!” said Mr. Glynn, scoffingly. But he turned uneasily in his chair, and was silent a moment — “Has he left no letter, or anything, to

show where he's gone to?—not that I want to know.”

“ I am not aware that he has, but, now you mention it, I should think it is not unlikely. Perhaps I had better inquire.”

Mr. Glynn, though he gave no assent, did not object to this proposal, and Wordley rang the bell, directing the attendant to summon Ernest's servant. The latter, a sharp Welsh boy, promptly appeared, but he could give no information respecting his master, nor had he seen anything lying about in his room, except an empty purse, which he produced, having laid it aside to give Ernest as soon as he should see him.

“ And you know nothing further ?” said Wordley.

“ No, sir.”

“ That will do, then,” cried Mr. Glynn, abruptly. “ You may go.”

As he left the room, Mr. Glynn, who

had seemed impatient for his departure, caught up the purse from the table, and examined it minutely. He then thrust it into the middle of the fire, beating the coal down on it with the poker. It was his own purse, which had been abstracted on the previous night from his room.

Wordley looked on with a half-smile, of which, however, not a trace appeared, when his uncle, turning round, evinced the most painful agitation, in which it was difficult to say whether sorrow or anger had the predominant place.

“ I don’t know how to account for it,” observed Wordley, as if lost in thought, “ but that purse is certainly yours, sir. How came it in Ernest’s room?—on the floor, too, dropped unconsciously ! But, my dearest uncle, how ill you look ! You are overwhelmed by this dreadful discovery. But do not, I entreat, look at it in its worst aspect. Suspicious as every-

thing seems, my cousin may be innocent of this great offence."

"Enough," said Mr. Glynn, sternly. "I will only make one remark—never mention his name in my presence again."

"You shall be obeyed, dear uncle; and I wish everything that might remind you of these unhappy events could be removed. It will, for instance, be very disagreeable to you, I'm sure, ever to be brought in contact with these Clintons, with whom my cousin formed such a disgraceful connexion. We had already partly determined on breaking up the Blynt farm, the lease of which has just run out; and as this man's conduct appears to me to have been bad, and his daughter's worse, I would recommend you to send them off."

"Manage it as you like," said Mr. Glynn, in a subdued, abstracted tone, the shock he had sustained leaving him completely prostrate, while his face, at first

turning ashy-pale, again grew flushed, as if the slur on the honourable name of his race had dyed it with shame. Wordley had not anticipated such success, and he immediately made it subservient to his designs, acquiring in a few minutes a greater ascendancy over his uncle than he had ever attained before. So complete was his triumph, that Mr. Glynn, when he left the room, gave orders that all business was to be referred to Mr. Wordley, to the utter discomfiture of the bailiff Frost, who, waiting at the door for an audience, overheard these directions, and was refused admission.

He looked up familiarly at Wordley as he passed out ; but the young Squire, who was never to be taken at a disadvantage, kept his eyes on the floor, seeming quite unconscious of his presence. Frost, however, followed him to his room.

“ Well, Mr. Frost, what is it ? ” said

Wordley, a little stiffly, as he threw himself into a chair.

“ Why, I’ve come about that lease,” replied the bailiff, who, though rather abashed, endeavoured to look confident. “ I was going to speak to the governor about it myself.”

“ The governor !” said Wordley. “ Who is he ?”

“ Well, I only knows of one—and that’s Mr. Glynn,” returned the bailiff, doggedly.

“ Really ?”

“ Yes ; and I thought you’d have managed, Squire, after my speakin’ to you, to have got him round to renew the lease. It wasn’t much to expect, and I’ve always heard one good turn deserves another.”

“ And you have no doubt been correctly informed, my good friend ; but though all this may strike you as very clear and precise, you must permit me to observe that

it sounds very mysterious to me. I can't imagine what you're talking about."

"I'm talkin' about the lease for John Clinton. I've spoke to you about it two or three times, and you've always put me off: so I went to the fountain-head."

"And you seem not to have fared any better. But as you want an answer, I will give you one at once. Mr. Glynn has not only no intention of renewing the lease, but he has directed the usual notice to be sent to Clinton, requiring him to leave the farm in three weeks from this day."

"And you think to get rid of me so, do you?"

"My good friend," said Wordley, with his most benignant look, expressive alike of forbearance and compassion, "your language is perfectly unintelligible. I am sorry to see you have been drinking."

"Have I, though?" returned Frost,

turning purple with rage: "drinkin'! Then, I suppose you don't want me to look after Master Ernest this morning, and make up a parcel of lies about him for your uncle—do you?"

Wordley's reply was a surprised smile, beaming, however, with his usual benevolence.

"You always grin on the same side of your mouth," pursued Frost; "you wouldn't like to try the other, would you—for a change? I've served your turn, and, now you've climbed up the tree, you want to kick away the ladder. But my word's snacks, and snacks I'll have, or I'll make a clean breast of it to Mr. Glynn."

"And you say this to me?" said Wordley, still preserving a dignified calm. "Well, we shall see."

He got up, and walked out of the room, leaving Frost uncertain whether he would

return. A moment's reflection, reviving his innate craft, suggested to the worthy bailiff that he had probably been rather precipitate, and gone too far, but before he could resolve on any conciliatory course, Wordley reappeared, accompanied, to Frost's great astonishment, by Mr. Glynn.

"Now, sir, here is Mr. Glynn," said the imperturbable Wordley. "What have you to tell him about me?"

"About you, Mr. Wordley?" faltered the panic-stricken bully.

"Yes, about me, my good sir. You threatened to complain of me to my uncle; and now I must insist on your speaking out, and stating your grievance in my presence."

Thus adjured, the bailiff turned an abject look on Mr. Glynn, but the old man was perfectly insensible to the appeal, contemplating both Frost and his nephew with the same indifference.

“I ask you pardon, Mr. Wordley,” said Frost, in despair. “I—”

“Don’t think any more about it,” said Wordley, with the magnanimity of an Alexander. “I freely forgive you, and was sure, if you had reflected a moment, you would never have used such language.”

“I’d sooner bite my tongue out, sir, than say a word against you,” rejoined the grateful bailiff, “and I don’t know who could.”

“Thank you, Mr. Frost—thank you, very much. Such an observation must, under the circumstances, be extremely satisfactory to my uncle, particularly as he has determined on discharging you. That, I think, sir, is your determination?”

“Yes, yes, send him away,” said Mr. Glynn, fretfully.

“Mr. Glynn has made out a cheque for your wages to the end of the month,” pur-

sued Wordley, presenting a draft, "which I have much pleasure in handing to you, and I shall be glad to hear of your well-doing. Now, my dear uncle."

And, before Frost could recover from this surprise, he led the passive Squire out of the room.

"Dead sold!" exclaimed the bailiff, after remaining for a moment rooted to the spot: "as if I could play stakes with him! But my turn 'll come some day—I won't forget him!"

And with a dark scowl on his face, now livid with evil passions, he swaggered out.

A few yards from the house, he met Clinton, who was pacing to and fro, awaiting his appearance.

"It's all up," he said. "They won't give you the lease, and I can't make 'em. They're determined to have you off."

"Cairnt be helped," replied Clinton, with his usual stolid composure.

“ You take it very quiet,” rejoined the bailiff, mockingly. “ Being turned out of house and home is no odds to you. You’ve got plenty to live on, you have !”

“ No, I airnt,” said Clinton. “ But gat these ’un.”—And he raised his brawny hands.

“ Give us hold on ’em,” cried Frost, with affected fervour, as he gave the farmer a terrible gripe. “ As they won’t have you, they shan’t have me, and so I’ve told ’em. I’ll stand by you. I’ve got money, too, and as long as I’ve a shilling left, you shall have sixpence on it.”

“ Thank’ee, friend. It’s a time of mournin’ and tribulation, but airnt goin’ to give in, nayther. Elder Sparrow he say we’rn comin’ an times and seasons, and all ourn lease be up speedy. Don’t know how’t be ! but Bethel’s the word : Amen !”

“ We can take a farm together,” said

Frost. "I tell you I've got money, and if your girl will only be agreeable, you'll never have occasion to work. You give me Jess for a wife, and I don't want any money from you."

"You'n have my consent, if's gat she's" replied Clinton, quite indifferent. "Cairnt say funder."

"Yes, you can—you can compel her," said Frost doggedly, "and you must."

"May'n fetch her to stream, but cairnt make her drink," rejoined the imperturbable farmer: "nor shairnt, nayther."

And all Frost's subtlety, using now protestations, now promises, failed to shake his resolution; for in the farmer's sluggish heart, there was but one thing that could contend with love for his child, and that was fanaticism.

Quickened by this affection, even he had observed an alteration in Jessie, which, in the sympathy it excited, imparted a degree

of sensibility to himself. Thus he avoided making any allusion to Ernest in her presence; and scrupulously concealed from her, for the same reason, how seriously he had compromised him with his uncle. But it required no new incitements to keep the living image of Ernest uppermost in her mind. And perhaps she cherished it the more, because she felt, since their meeting of the previous day, that they had probably parted for ever, and that her feeble glimmer of happiness was at an end. Yet the intelligence that Ernest had clandestinely left the Keep, which spread like wildfire over the neighbourhood, and reached her ears only too soon, caused her a fresh pang, as if it was not till then that the utter hopelessness of her attachment became fully apparent. The imaginary sorrows of the past disappeared before this widowhood of her heart, although, from awakening feelings hitherto inert and

dormant, the real affliction was a relief, compared with the vacuity and stagnation of her former existence. So forcible, indeed, was the contrast, that the memory of a few bright hours almost compensated for the misery of a desolate future.

It was not strange that, dwelling so fondly on these reminiscences, she should continually recall what Ernest had said, particularly those remarks which most evinced the elevation of his mind, directing her to look for consolation and support to the beneficent Disposer of all things. She treasured them, alas! not for their purport, but because they were his sentiments, and testified to his worth. But who can tell where the seed of their thoughts may fall—on good soil or stony ground; or what effect they may ultimately produce? Divine intelligence may speak with a child's voice, and words uttered unthinkingly, without a purpose,

sometimes take root in another bosom, and, in due time, bring forth fruit a hundredfold.

Jessie was engaged in her usual duties when her father and Frost presented themselves.

"Squire wunt gie no fresh lease, Jess," said Clinton, while his companion, with a familiar greeting, flung himself into a seat; "so we'n han to pack."

"I was afraid it would be so," replied Jessie, though her changing colour showed she was hardly prepared for the worst. "But don't grieve about it, father. You've let it harass you too long; and now it's off your mind, you'll be able to look after something else."

"See to 't 'cording," answered Clinton; "but Muster Frost he's han a word wi' you now, so leave the two an ye 'lane a bit."

"You needn't do that," said Jessie, her

face flushing, though she spoke in a subdued tone. "I'd rather he said what he has to say while you're present."

"That aint the proper way to go courtin', my lass," said Frost. "But, come, I want to make things agreeable, and let you do as you like; so you sit down, old man! And now to the point."

He looked over to Jessie, as if for some encouragement, but she sat quite still, without raising her eyes.

"Father and I have been talking about you," he said, at length, recovering his effrontery, "and have come to a sort of understandin', by reason that it only wants you to agree, and it's all settled. Stop a minute, till I tell you the whole concern. You were just speakin' about what father 'ud do, as he's lost his lease; and now I'll tell you. First, he's goin' to join partners with me—aint you, old man?"

“Go an,” said Clinton, nodding his head.

“Our agreement’s this, Jessie,” pursued Frost—“that you and me make a match of it, and father come and live with us; and, hang me, if we don’t make him comfortable!—only you say the word: will you have me, or no?”

“No,” replied Jessie. “What you propose is impossible.”

“Impossible! Why? What’s the objections?”

“It would be useless to name any. Spare yourself and me the pain, and take my refusal for an answer.”

“No, I won’t,” returned Frost, desperately. “No! That ’ud be letting you off rather too easy. If you’ve got anything to say against my character—” and he assumed an air of indignant probity—“say it, now I’m here to meet it, and I’ll clear myself of it, I know.”

“I’ve nothing to say against you.”

“Then, why won’t you marry me?”

“I’ve told you already—I can’t.”

“Can’t means won’t,” cried Frost, savagely. “Better say at once you won’t.”

The word rose to Jessie’s lips, as the angry look to her brow; but something within, the newly awakened instincts of human sympathy, dictated a gentler answer.

“I want to tell you kindly, and without offence,” she said; “but I am not the less determined. My resolution is taken, and I will abide by it.”

“You hear her!” said Frost to her father, “She refuses a home for you and herself, though you’ve got to turn out on nothing. And you let her ride over you in this way, and make a foot-ball of you!”

“Don’t know,” said Clinton, rubbing his forehead, “Mun choose for hersel, and never mind I.”

“You’re a fool!” was bursting from the bailiff’s lips, but he restrained himself, and turned again to Jessie.

“Come, lass, think it over,” he said, more temperately. “Don’t throw away a good chance, and a man who’ll make you a good partner. Here’s old father wants us to make all square, though he keeps mum; and I won’t say, on considerin’, but what he’s in the right on it. Come, you’ve had your way, and now give in; there’s no use standing out any more.”

“Why do you torment me in this way?” returned Jessie. “If you have any feeling for me—or even for yourself, you’ll desist; for what I have said I will adhere to.”

“I see how it is!” exclaimed Frost, exasperated. “You’ve set your mind on young Glynn, though he’s slighted you, and looked down upon you. They say, that’s the way to make a woman fond of

you, but I do wonder at a girl of spirit like you—a girl who might have her pick of any man—takin' on about such a strip as him. Why, there's girls 'ud marry the first chance, just to spite him. And now he's run off, too—nobody knows where."

"And you dare to talk to me of him!" cried Jessie, all her feelings kindled at the insult—"after what you've said about us, too! Man, go away!—leave me! I despise you!"

"You don't mean it—you can't!" cried Frost, the strong passion of his heart for the moment transforming him. "I've never said or done anything about you, or to you, but in love—all in love. But you're angry now. I'll go off, and come another time. You'll say, yes, yet."

"Never," cried Jessie. "With my last breath I'll say never."

But Frost was gone.

CHAPTER II.

ADVERSITY.

NOTWITHSTANDING all his previous misgivings, the result of the letter to Mr. Colville came on Ernest like a thunderbolt. He had yet to learn, in the stern experience of life, that merit, instead of being an advantage, often exposes its luckless possessor to perils which never reach mediocrity—that it provokes jealousy, enmity, envy, hatred, and detraction, and that, associated with poverty or dependence, it is a crime. As for showing consideration for meritorious service, the practice is almost obsolete. Still, as in the

days of Pharaoh, the taskmasters of labour give no straw for their brick; zeal, diligence, and unwearied devotion they count as nothing, and requite only with meanness, perfidy, and oppression. But there is a higher incentive to fidelity than the hope of reward: it is the sense of duty—the inspiration of religion, principle, and honour; and Ernest, who had obeyed this monitor, was now sustained by self-respect.

The little fund he had brought from Glynnellan was still untouched, and with this in his purse, he arrived in the world's metropolis, the great mart of industry and talent. For hours he wandered about the streets bewildered, as if his admiration of all he saw, the stately shops, the regal buildings, and the crowded thoroughfares, could never be satiated, and in the endless labyrinth, he knew not where to turn. Night, at length, found him the inmate of a humble lodging, in one of the suburbs,

where, worn in body and mind, he soon forgot his cares in sleep.

But morning recalled the question lately so often considered—what was he to do? He had reached the one spot on earth favourable to every kind of pursuit, and found, to his great disappointment, that, for all the prospect it opened, he might as well be in a desert. At first, he fell into the mistake of answering advertisements, but after a reasonable expenditure in postage, without eliciting a single reply, became sensible that this was a delusion. Then, to leave no stone unturned, he sought to develop his literary abilities, and, among other things, wrote a profusion of poetry, offering it to various publishers, all of whom, however, declined even to look at it, and he tried the magazines and periodicals with the same result. At last, he made the discovery, that literature is not a thing to be taken up by every un-

tried hand, and coined at once into money, but that it requires a peculiar training, and, having lost his confidence, he gave up the contest.

His money was gradually dwindling, when chance led him to the docks, and traversing those grand reservoirs of commerce, from which its golden tide flows as from a spring into the remotest sea, he paused before a vessel bound for the United States, one of the magnificent liners not yet superseded by steam. A placard on the mainmast announced its destination, and forthwith the idea flashed across him that here was a solution for his perplexities. He would go to America! The El Dorado which he had sought unsuccessfully in London, he might find in the new world, where, amongst the thriving populations of young states, there was yet room for labour, and bread for honest industry. With the enthusiasm of an

ardent mind, he instantly anticipated success, and became eager to carry out his design. It was as if some invisible intelligence had struck a long-silent chord of his heart, and given it unnatural action. He paced to and fro in front of the ship, vainly endeavouring to curb and compose his thoughts, and view the project in a dispassionate light. He only conjured up new dreams, all suggesting the same step, and, besides these, there was the temptation, so irresistible when it presents itself, of visiting a distant land, of seeing and mixing with a strange people, and that longing after novelty which exercises a natural, though sometimes a dangerous influence, over the enterprising and the young.

There was no time to lose, as the ship was to sail in two days, and having made some inquiries on board, he proceeded to the broker's to arrange for his passage, which, caring nothing for a little discom-

fort, he took in the steerage, as the best accommodation his means could command. Indeed, he found, after purchasing a hammock, and a few necessaries for the voyage, that even this tasked his finances to the utmost, and would leave him to land at New York with only a few shillings in his pocket. But he was not in a mood to be depressed by a prospect, which might have appeared discouraging enough to others.

By the middle of the next day, all his arrangements were completed, and having now, for the first time in many weeks, a few idle hours, he strolled leisurely through the streets, to take a last look at the great city. The ramble was not without its incident. In passing round one of the squares, he happened to glance into the inclosure, when he caught sight of a face and form too familiar to be readily forgotten. It was Emily Burge, in whom the interval

of a year had developed a thousand new charms, and who, meeting his eye, recognized him directly, and came to the gate to accost him.

“ I wonder how I knew you,” she said, as they shook hands ; “ you have altered so.”

“ You have altered too,” replied Ernest, in a complimentary tone, “ but I should have known you anywhere. And what a time it seems since I saw you !”

“ So many changes have occurred since !” rejoined Emily, without making any allusion to his abrupt departure from Glynnellan. “ Papa has taken a house in the square now, and we are coming up to town every year.”

“ You will like that.”

“ No ; I like the country best. We are kept so busy here, going from one place to another, that we have never a moment to ourselves.”

“A constant round of gaiety,” said Ernest. “You will become quite a lady of fashion.”

Emily shook her head with a half smile. “Miss Cramboy despairs of ever making me one,” she said, “and, do you know, I suspect she has a preference for Bydvil herself, though she tries to conceal it.”

“I can imagine that. But I have been very remiss not to inquire about Miss Cramboy. Of course, she is in town with you?”

“Oh, yes, she is in the grounds. You must come and see her.”

“I shall be delighted.” And he stepped into the inclosure. “How does the school get on?” he continued, as they proceeded round the walk.

“Oh! we’ve been obliged to give up the sciences,” replied Emily. “The children were so dull, Miss Cramboy could make nothing of them, and they

actually went to sleep while she was delivering a lecture on the laws of mechanics."

"I wonder so astute a person as Miss Cramboy expected any other result. And so the whole scheme is dropped now, I suppose?"

"Oh, no; but the children are only taught reading and writing at present."

"*Your* plan then, after all. And I dare say you are progressing, are you not?"

"Miss Cramboy thinks we ought to do more. But there she is! She will be so glad to see you."

"As I shall her," said Ernest. "I leave England to-morrow, and it is a great satisfaction to me to be able to bid her and yourself good bye."

"You're going abroad then," said Emily, with a look of deep interest.

"To America."

“Will you be away long?”

“I hardly know yet. I am like the wanderer in the fairy tale—going to seek my fortune: so my return is quite uncertain.”

“Well, I hope you will be as successful, and come back soon,” said Emily, rather gravely. She tripped a pace or two forward, to meet the governess, who was now advancing towards them. “See, who is here, Miss Cramboy,” she said—“Mr. Ernest Glynn!”

Ernest received a cordial greeting.

“It’s a curious psychological fact,” observed Miss Cramboy, taking off her spectacles, and wiping the glasses with her handkerchief; then carefully replacing them on her nose—“that I was wondering what could possibly have become of you, Mr. Glynn, just as you came up. A similar thing has often happened to me before, in connexion with other persons,

and it suggests the inquiry whether we haven't instinctively a perception of objects—that is, whether certain images are not cast upon the mind before they are visibly presented to the eye.”

“That is investing our spiritual essence with great sensitiveness,” replied Ernest.

“I am persuaded it is far more sensitive than is generally supposed,” returned the governess. “Clairvoyance, indeed, is awakening us to the truth, while it discloses the latent sensibilities of matter; and before long, we shall find the spirit has functions we have never dreamt of. Nor is there anything really strange in this, as the spirit is the active, animating principle. Matter itself is inert—it derives its vitality from the spirit.”

“No doubt,” said Ernest, “but it is the medium between the spirit and extraneous things, and hence we must sup-

pose the mind receives its impressions through the organs of the body."

"Of inanimate objects, perhaps," returned Miss Cramboy, "but this does not apply to the affinities between spirit and spirit. Thus my mind may have become sensible of your approach before I saw you with my eyes, as I believe it did. Be assured, we are approaching great discoveries in this department of knowledge; and much has already been done in America."

"Well, it *is* curious you should mention America," said Emily; "for Mr. Glynn is going there."

"Going to America!" exclaimed Miss Cramboy. "What an interesting fact! Now pray, Mr. Glynn, get yourself made a medium."

"For the spirit rapping, you mean," said Ernest, smiling. "It is impracticable, for I have no faith."

“Science never requires faith,” replied Miss Cramboy: “it only asks investigation. We should never reject till we have examined.”

“A wise maxim,” said Ernest. “I will try to bear it always in mind. And now, Miss Cramboy, I must say farewell.”

The governess pressed his hand, and a look beamed through her spectacles, which, in the emotion of the moment, Ernest thought more becoming to her than all her philosophy—though that, in moderation, was to him far from uninteresting.

“There is papa just going in,” said Emily, directing his attention to the house. “You must say good-bye to him.”

“Of course,” replied Ernest.

A few paces brought them to the mansion, which was directly opposite the gate, when Mr. Burge, who was standing on

the steps, observed them. Ernest, remembering his cordiality at their last meeting, held out his hand in a friendly way, never doubting a kind reception.

“ You have the advantage of me, sir,” said Mr. Burge, with his most majestic air, and as if he had never seen him before.

“ Why, papa, don’t you know Mr. Ernest Glynn ?” cried Emily.

“ Oh !” drawled out the iron-master. “ You must excuse me, sir, I’m very much engaged. I wish you good morning, sir.”

And turning his back on Ernest he pushed past into the house. Emily, no less ashamed than grieved, was ready to sink to the ground, when Ernest silently wrung her hand and hurried off. He had yet to discover, as he grew older, that our fair-weather friends are all Mr. Burges, and in the day of adversity turn their back upon us.

CHAPTER III.

THE EMIGRANT SHIP.

WHAT a scene on board the emigrant ship ! what a confusion, what a Babel ! the decks, from one end to the other, piled with luggage, packages, stores, and hencoops ; above and below, swarming with passengers, of every age and degree, with rugged sailors gliding through the midst of them, and the captain and mate shouting together, while an incessant “ Ay, ay, sir,” and a grand chorus of “ Hoy, hoy, hoy,” from a score of voices, as the brave ship was hauled out of the docks, and taken in tow by a steamer, at once deafened and bewildered.

The steerage was an absolute chaos. Chests, hampers, and bundles, of every size and description, were so heaped together, that in places it was quite blocked up, and a passage could only be effected by climbing over a barricade. Every possible seat, the summit of a pile, its sides, and its base, had its occupant—sometimes, indeed, supporting a whole group or family, with slim grown-up girls and prattling children—or a young married couple, with an infant in the woman's arms, or solitary, taciturn, and sullen-looking men. Here a few were still talking with friends they were to leave behind, and who, in dread of the inevitable parting, deferred going ashore till they reached Gravesend; here again, women were sobbing, with bowed heads and bursting hearts, though loved and familiar voices, only to be silenced by death, still whispered hope and comfort. One had fallen

into hysterics, and uttered loud, heart-rending cries, which rang through the ship, but, in the universal uproar, excited only a momentary interest. Some, on the other hand, maintained an air of perfect composure, while a few of the more reckless, or more selfish, indifferent to every exhibition of suffering, laughed and joked ; and others took a rough meal on their boxes, as if the scene around had no real existence.

The persons composing this assemblage were of the most motley description—mechanics, clerks, small farmers, and smaller tradesmen—ploughmen in smock-frocks, London sharpers in shabby dress-coats, and a large sprinkling of Irish. There was the white-washed insolvent, fresh from Whitecross Street—the yet unsuspected defaulter and the runaway ; there was the honest adventurer, full of enterprise, hope, and resolution ; the deli-

cate young milliner, and the Irish maid-servant, whose brother, after a year's sojourn in the golden land of labour, had sent home the money for her passage. And amongst all these it was easy to distinguish two or three sharp Yankee chapmen, who had come over to England with a speculation some few months before, and were now on their way home, with the proceeds of the expedition in their pockets.

At last the vessel reached Gravesend, and, amidst the confusion of partings and fresh arrivals, a strange sinister-looking man sprang on board, and glided unquestioned, and almost unobserved, through every part of the ship. He was a detective policeman, in search of a fugitive, but though, on information given, he might easily have laid his hand on two or three, the particular delinquent sought for was not to be seen, and the officer disappeared as he came.

Now commenced a regular clearance of the decks; the ship's stores, which it seemed impossible to stow away, vanished like mist; the mountains of luggage sank into the deep gulf of the hold; the bedding was rolled up, and packed in the hammock-nettings; the hen-coops were lashed against the bulwarks; the boats were hoisted over the gunnels; and before night, when the brave ship was well on her way, everything was in order.

To Ernest that night was one of suffering. The steerage, from being only a crowded dormitory, had become an hospital, as if the plague of Egypt had fallen on every couch, and struck its inmate down. The deadly sea-sickness prostrated the sturdiest and strongest, as well as the delicate and weak. Ernest, at sea for the first time, felt all its nausea, and all its depression. It seemed as if his head would split; his brain turn. An intense apathy,

a moral oblivion, oppressed and stupified him ; and his past life, his struggles, hopes, fears, and sorrows, were wholly forgotten in his physical helplessness. The hot, dense atmosphere—for the hatches had been put on, and a hundred berths were fitted around—almost stifled him, but, at the moment, he could hardly have moved to save his life. This is the worst effect of the visitation—the utter prostration it produces, making us incapable of the least exertion. But, in the midst of his suffering, he was alive to the calls of humanity, and when he could not move to aid himself, rose to assist another, procuring a drink of water for one of his fellow-passengers, who had sunk to the last stage of exhaustion. To his surprise he felt better moving about, and dressing himself, he went on deck. The night, though dark, was fine, and the fresh breeze revived and cheered him. After pacing the deck

for a time he sat down on a block, under the long boat, and, leaning back, fell asleep.

Morning found the gallant ship off the Lizard, and Ernest, not yet himself, but more accustomed to the motion, strained his eyes at this last point of his native land. Others, too, were there, leaning over the bulwarks, with their gaze rivetted on those dear cliffs, which, alas! they would never behold again. They were not mere travellers, but emigrants—exiles; the bone and sinew, and strength of our isle, cast out like mire! What wonder that some, in the bitterness of their hearts, hurled back curses at its shore, while others were silent, but blessed it.

Suddenly there was a general stir on board. The captain, who had been scanning the horizon with his glass, called out to shorten sail. The shrill pipe of the boatswain rang through the ship, and in

a moment the sails were hauled up, and the vessel hove-to.

Ernest now saw a small white sail, like a speck, on the water. The breeze was blowing fresh, and the little craft, with its outspread canvas wing, came flying along towards the ship, skimming over the waves as if it were a bird. Three streamers were hoisted in its top, a signal which the American captain well understood. The boat, indeed, brought out the fugitive whom the policeman had sought for at Gravesend, and who now came on board, with his ill-gotten wealth, a free and independent gentleman. But in this world, money, no matter how obtained, covers all defects, and many a thief sits in a high place, and has worship in the presence of his fellows.

The good barque was again on her way. The wind freshened, and, as day advanced, the seamen, with whom Ernest was soon

on friendly terms, were unanimous in predicting a gale. Nothing could be more distressing than the motion, as the vessel, with the wind almost aft, rolled about in the chops of the channel; but Ernest persevered in remaining on deck, and gradually felt the good effect of his decision. In the evening he was able to lie down with comfort, and soon fell asleep.

He was awoke by a tremendous uproar on deck. Below, indeed, the noise and excitement were hardly less; many of the passengers had left their berths, and thrown on their clothes, and Ernest was not slow to follow their example. Some were calling for a light; others, in agitated voices, asked every one if there was any danger. Ernest made at once for the deck. The hatches had been battened down, and at the companion-ladder he encountered several women, who had started up half-dressed, but found them-

selves shut in. Quieting them as well as he could, he groped his way to a private ladder beyond, leading to the great cabin, and thence reached the deck.

It was a sublime, though appalling scene. The ship, heeled over by the gale, on one side was almost level with the water, while the other rose high up; and, above, the sea stood like a huge wall—like a mountain, black, erect, and massive, yet seeming ready to topple down, and engulf all below. The tempest swept through the rigging like thunder, and broke in a whirlwind against the bulwarks, making every timber quiver. From the deep trough in which the ship laboured, the sky was invisible, and Egyptian darkness filled the void, though the white crests of the waves, high overhead, gleamed like fire. The unvarying chant of the seamen came down from the dim yards as if they were wailing spirits hovering over the

ship; while, amidst the roar of the storm, the captain, with the trumpet ever at his lips, shouted forth his orders in a voice that seemed to come from the great deep. Through all, the ship pitched, and tossed, and plunged, now almost diving into the water, now rising in defiance, the waves dashing furiously against her sides, and covering her decks with spray.

Ernest felt ashamed of being a spectator, while others, no stronger than himself, were endangering their lives for the ship's safety; but it required only to look around to know that he was powerless. At this moment, he observed a female figure standing directly under the yards, and seizing her arm, he drew her away. As he did so, a block fell from above, and split in two at their feet.

“What a deliverance!” exclaimed the girl, with emotion. “How much I am indebted to you! If you had not

drawn me away, I should have been killed."

"It might not have struck you," replied Ernest, "but I thought you were in a dangerous situation, right under the yards. Hadn't you better go below?"

"Oh, no! My cabin is on the deck, in the round-house," replied the young lady, "but I like being here best. I seem safer."

"Safer!"

"Yes; I feel I am in the presence of God. I know He is here. When I look round, I see He layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters, maketh the clouds His chariot, and rideth on the wings of the wind."

"That may well give confidence, and to hear such a sentiment from your lips, while we are so exposed to the tempest, is an incident to be remembered. But are you not afraid?"

“ No, I like to see the elements beating against each other, to hear the storm roar, and the waves rage. Nature is so mighty and so awful ! Who would miss such a spectacle as this, merely because of the danger ? ”

“ I confess I would not ; but I could hardly have believed it had no terrors for you. ”

“ Terrors it has. I know there is but a plank between us and destruction, and that any moment the vessel may founder. How the deck trembles beneath us ! how the masts crack, and strain, and groan ! One could imagine the ship was alive, and battling with the storm. ”

“ It certainly almost appears so. Now we are plunging down ; the rope in my hand throbs with the effort, and I can hardly retain my grasp. But I wonder at your courage and self-possession. You have the spirit of a sailor. ”

“ Women have been sailors before now.”

“ Yes, but they have been actuated by an ulterior object, not by mere love of the profession.”

“ You think us incapable of facing danger, then, except for some personal end? That is regarding us in a mean light indeed ; for if we are only courageous when our own happiness or interest is concerned, only to gratify our own selfishness, we can never attain to heroism.”

“ You quite misapprehend me. I meant to say, that in the instances you refer to, where women have adopted the garb and the calling of the sailor, they have been influenced, not by a love of danger, but by the strong impulses of passion. This was not to be selfish : it was an act of affection, devotion, and self-sacrifice. To understand it, one must be here, with death on every side of us, and know that

while I, a man, stand powerless and helpless, those young girls have mounted the rigging in scenes like this, and shared all the perils of the hardest seaman. That was heroism, surely !”

“ Still you think we must be sustained by a personal inspiration ? But women have braved the fury of the sea, and horrors as great as any around us, solely to carry aid to others, to people they have never seen, and never heard of ; and if I could forget the timidity of my sex, I should wish to emulate, not love-sick damsels, but such a heroine as Grace Darling. The motive in her was unimpeachable.”

“ It was so in the others, too, but in her it was the highest that can animate our nature. You are differently placed, and in remaining here, are exposing yourself to danger without an object. See what a wave is rising before us ! I’m afraid it will wash over the ship.”

They were both holding by a hand-rail, but as the vessel rose to the towering sea, Ernest, as before, seized the girl's arm, and grasped her firmly. As he had feared, the wave broke over the bows, and, pouring in a torrent from the fore-castle, swept down the main-deck up to their knees, receding with a violence that threatened to wash them overboard. Ernest felt his companion clinging to his breast, and he seemed to have the strength of a giant. Dark as it was, he saw her face was ashy-pale, while her long hair streamed on the wind, giving her an appearance never to be forgotten.

The water, meanwhile, rushed out through the gullies, leaving them perfectly drenched.

"Now you are safe," said Ernest. "Let me recommend you to go to your cabin."

"You will think me a coward."

“No one could think that, after witnessing your conduct. But it is really imprudent to remain.”

“Then, I will follow your advice.”

Ernest still held her arm, and, seizing a favourable moment, assisted her across the deck to the roundhouse.

“Thank you for all your care,” she said, as they reached the door. “I shall sit down in my cabin, and think of the storm. Good night.”

She gave him her hand, with an air so unconstrained, yet so maidenly, that it would be difficult to describe. Ernest remained some time longer on deck, when he again sought his hammock, though more to ponder over his singular adventure than to sleep.

The incident had made a deep impression upon him, and, at first, he thought of it with pleasure and satisfaction. He was more struck with his new acquaint-

ance, whose face he had hardly seen, and whose name he did not know, than many men would like to have owned, and her shadowy image was fixed vividly in his mind. But this was only the spell of a moment, natural to the situation in which he had been placed. Reflection brought more sober suggestions, presenting it in another light. He now harassed himself with the thought that the lady had supposed him to be a cabin passenger, like herself, as she no doubt had; though it did not follow that, on discovering her error, she would look down upon him as an inferior, and abjure his further acquaintance. But the example of Mr. Burge was a lesson not easily effaced, and he determined, by keeping out of her sight for the remainder of the voyage, not to expose himself to a repetition of such an affront. And, indeed, he was not sorry to avert the humiliation of a discovery,

for poverty is a blemish which the best of us like to conceal.

The gale, after continuing unabated through the night, grew less violent in the morning, but the weather remained very rough for several days. Few, therefore, ventured on deck, and Ernest was not of the number. But clear skies and a light breeze brought up the whole company, and the deck swarmed with cheerful groups, men, women, and children, diverting themselves as they best could. The afterpart of the ship was appropriated to the cabin passengers; for'ard, from the main-hatchway, to those of the steerage; consequently, Ernest was not likely to encounter the young lady, so long as he chose to shun her, and, by never looking aft, he took care to avoid the chance of a recognition. It cost him more trouble to repel the advances of some of the steerage passengers; but,

besides being cautious in forming acquaintances, he felt that fortune had thrown him into rather questionable society, and persisted in holding himself aloof. But, while others were devoured with *ennui*, he found plenty of amusement, and the voyage, instead of being irksome, constantly presented him with some object of interest. He would stand for hours on the forecastle, watching the porpoises tumble round the bows, or the gambols of a shoal of bonitas, as they raced alongside. Now a strange sail hove in sight; now some monster of the deep, a dolphin or a shark, kept abreast of the ship; now he beguiled the time with his favourite ‘Spectator,’ the only relic of his library. But night, with its calm and placid stillness, was his season of enjoyment. Then he delighted to sit, solitary and unnoticed, under the stern of the long-boat, and ruminate without interrup-

tion. The lofty sky, studded with a million stars—the boundless ocean, immensity above and around, suggested to his mind a thousand reflections, pure, grand, and elevating. Imagination led him back to the time when, after years of anticipation, Columbus first navigated that trackless sea, leading his three sorry caravels over its summer waves in uncertainty and doubt. How hopefully he had seized on every indication of approaching land—every floating weed, and flock of birds, and sought to allay, by these tokens, the murmurs of his despairing crew. But still nothing presented itself but the same blank void, the same illimitable sea; and in the silence of night, his eye scanned the horizon, in vain quest of the long-expected land. What is it rises before him so suddenly, making his heart beat high, and his bosom swell with expectation? A LIGHT! yes, from the door of an Indian's

hut, amidst the solitude of yet unseen mountains, gleams a light that will never be extinguished; and the bold mariner has reached, not the Western Asia of his dreams, not the fabled lands of Prester John or Marco Polo, but a **NEW WORLD**.

One night, Ernest had lingered in his nook later than usual, and had just reached the main hatchway, on his way below, when he came suddenly on two ladies, who were pacing the quarter-deck, and the younger of whom he recognised as his companion in the storm. With some confusion he returned her bow, and passed on, not without an impression that she had herself been inclined to stop. He almost doubted whether politeness did not require such an attention on his own part, though, on reflection, he was confirmed in his previous views, and believed that he should spare himself future mortification by rigidly carrying them out.

But prudent thoughts could not still the emotions that began to arise in his heart. In that hurried encounter, the hitherto shadowy image was converted into a real and sensible object, invested with a permanent interest. He could not escape from its presence, and no longer resisted its fascination—though this submission, perhaps more dangerously for his peace, was only in his solitary musings, and his resolve to shun further intercourse was unchanged.

The period of his probation was drawing to a close, for, with the morning light, a cry was heard from the top—a cry that brought every soul to the deck; it was “LAND ON THE LARBOARD BOW!”

CHAPTER IV.

ANOTHER WORLD.

LAND ! the land of promise, of freedom, of plenty ! the land flowing with milk and honey, where the rich man, with his hundred manors and townships, counts but one, and the poor man has “ a fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work.” What an opening ! what a prospect ! Our own language still, but a new form of government, a new people, a new hemisphere. Here, for ages to come, all Europe may throw in its surplus population, and there will still be room. Here, flesh and blood, in their naked strength, are wealth, life,

energy, and power. Here only the negro is a slave, and he dances in his chains.

Is it indeed so? Have we, in crossing the Atlantic, left behind us the ill-savour of Moab, and the gods of Egypt? Alas, no! We are still among men. Poor human nature, with its heritage of frailty, is the same in America as in Europe. Here, in the wilderness, it has set up its calf, and there are no lack of worshippers. But virtue still retains her remnant, and, among the tribes, there are ten thousand, who have not bent their knees to Mammon.

Ernest found himself in one of those vast ordinaries, which in New York are called hotels, where the stranger, fresh from European restraints, receives his first lesson in American life. The gong was just announcing the dinner hour, and in flocked people of all ranks, scrambling up to the well-spread board, a Yankee

table d'hôte, as if the last comer had to forfeit his rations. Ernest was perfectly bewildered by the hurry and confusion of the scene, till, by some inscrutable process, every one subsided into a seat. Then commenced such a clatter on the plates, as few untrained ears could withstand. Even London's Mansion-house never heard such a din. And no one lost any time—except Ernest, who, with English simplicity, sat looking on, knife and fork in hand, like a rower resting on his oars, and quite unmindful that he was losing the tide—this, too, notwithstanding that a good-natured fellow on his right, in the midst of his own exertions, strove to rouse his attention by gasping forth, every now and then, the name of some choice dish, while he gave him a nudge with his elbow. At length, all was over, and, through his own negligence, Ernest had made but an apology

for a dinner, famishing in the midst of plenty. His friendly neighbour now found time to address him.

“ Just landed ? ” he asked.

“ Yes, ” was the reply.

“ Come in a liner ? ”

“ In the ‘ Jefferson. ’ ”

“ Cabin passage or steerage ? ”

“ Steerage. ”

“ Pretty well found on board ? ”

“ Pretty well. ”

“ I expect you’re rather astonished at this country ? ”

“ Rather so. ”

“ Come on spec ? ”

“ I hope to obtain employment. ”

The American turned a sharp glance over his face.

“ What can you turn your hand to ? ” he said.

“ My means will not allow me to be fastidious, ” replied Ernest, with a good-

humoured smile, and not without a hope, from the interest he manifested, that the inquirer might be disposed to give him some useful information. “Anything respectable.”

“Respectable. Ah! there you come out with your old-world pride. Anything’s respectable, if it’s honest. You must turn-to at anything in this country, if you want to make a do of it; and if one thing doesn’t answer, try another. You’ll hit the right nail at last. *Experienca docet*—meaning, in English, experience does it. We’re a go-a-head people, and can’t stand about fixins. I’ve tried a dozen specs myself, and now I’m just comin’ out with another. Tomorrow I commence on an entirely new wrinkle.”

“Indeed.”

“Yes, as an auctioneer, But come, I

see you're a likely sort. What can you do?"

"Shall I leave out the respectable, and say I will try anything?"

"That's more like. But I expect you're not much at calculating."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because you haven't come out in that line with your dinner. I expect you should calculate every mouthful, and keep the knife and fork going like a piston. Quick at dinner, quick at calculation. But you'll get on better in time. Experience does it; I'd pay anything for experience, except dollars. So you're ready for the first berth that offers?"

"Yes."

"Then, here's at you, straight. I want a clerk, and came here on the lookout, guessing old 'Jeff' had brought out a few. Shall we strike a bargain?"

“ I’m willing.”

“ Come along, then. We’ll talk it over at my store, and you shall have the rest of the day to practise calculation ! You’ll soon know how many cents go to a dollar. Experience does it.”

And they left the hotel together.

CHAPTER V.

THE AUCTION MART.

ANYTHING IS RESPECTABLE, IF IT IS HONEST. What a sentiment to put in capitals ! Yet, strange to say, Ernest was impressed by it. Here in England, where we have the advantage of being trained up in the worship of Moloch—your pardon, dear reader, of Mammon—such a vulgarism can only excite derision ; but, in fact, Ernest was so far Americanised already. He actually believed, despite that time-honoured proverb which has become an article of our faith, that money did not make the man, although it might

in the estimation of our arrogant parvenus, make the gentleman.

The rostrum of Selim Driver, his new employer, was in Bowery ; and here, on the following morning, Ernest was early at his post, preparing for the great business of the day, which was to be signalized by Selim's first sale. The young auctioneer had already, as he confidently informed Ernest, been a farmer, a horse-swapper, and a swamp-doctor ; had kept a general store, travelled for orders, and " come out strong " as a portrait-painter ; and finally, had sailed as a supercargo, and been on a whaling voyage. In all these callings he had picked up a great deal of " experience," but very few dollars.

The most heterogeneous assortment of articles, from a lady's workbox to a bag of sugar, or, as Selim metaphorically observed, " from a ship's anchor to a marlin-

spike," were heaped round the store, purporting to be the stock of a bankrupt factor, but really being odds and ends accumulated in a variety of ways, some from Selim's past speculations, and some from stores in the city, where they had been turned out to make room for new goods. These were piled round Selim and Ernest like a barricade, under the superintendence of a free black, named "General Jackson," who was overlooked from the rostrum by Selim.

"Now, you lazy, jabbering old Hickory, you, look alive, will you? and mind how you put down that glass vase, or you'll run your head against a lamp-post," cried Selim, as the arrangements proceeded.

"Yes, massa, me take care," replied the General.

"You'll take care to smash it, I expect. Ah! there it goes!—you infernal thick-headed son of a dead nigger."

“Not mean do it, massa,” said the General, calmly contemplating the fragments. “He jump out my hand. Neber see such a ting—neber my life.”

“Why, you raptandering, filibustering old pirate, I saw you throw it down like a red-hot poker. Have you got no joints in your claws, woolly-head? Now I’ll tell you what it is. You know my bowie-knife?”

“Yes, massa.”

“I expect it’s pretty sharp?”

“’Spect so, massa.”

“Well, the first time I see you catch hold of anything breakable, mind—glass, china, or crockery, I’ll stick it into you, if your namesake, General Jackson, stood by, just as he was when he whopped the Britishers at New Orleans. I consider he’s let me off cheap,” he added to Ernest —“only one small imitation vase, value five cents.”

“ I’m sorry it should have happened,” replied Ernest.

“ Cheap, I assure you,” rejoined Selim ;
“ I’ve took it out in experience. I know now that rampscampering nigger airnt to be trusted with breakables, and that’s worth the money. I don’t mind expense, if I get experience. But they’re beginning to come in now. I calculate we shall have a few.”

A motley assemblage, indeed, soon collected in the auction-room, attracted alike by the bill of fare without, and the display within. There was the usual allowance of brokers and old housekeepers, come to look out for bargains, with a sprinkling of country-folk, and two or three loafers from “ away east ” and “ down west,” who had been drawn in by curiosity, and were immediately singled out as victims by the quick eye of Selim. Nothing could be more equitable, how-

ever, than the general distribution of the goods, which was regulated on the principle of one prize to four blanks, so that if a person wished to purchase an article of any utility, they had to take with it four incumbrances, which were of no use whatever, but added materially to the cost.

“ Before I begin, ladies and gentlemen,” said Selim, “ I wish you all to understand that this is a final and unreserved sale, without dodging or shuffling. That is a course which I, as an independent citizen, would never condescend to. Moreover, the goods are all A 1, and they’re to be sold for whatever they’ll fetch. It’s a regular out-and-out, *genuine* sale, by order, and seldom has it been my lot to offer to public competition such a valuable assortment of articles at such a sacrifice. People in trade may complain of the figures at which these astounding bargains will go, but I expect that, under the free

institutions of this country, we have a right, as independent citizens, to part with our goods on any terms we please." Here there was a buzz of approbation from the audience.—" And, acting under the instructions I have received, and bearing in mind my privileges as an American citizen (applause renewed) I shall not be deterred, by any threats or intimidation, from carrying out my object ; and I hereby give notice that I carry a bowie-knife for my protection, which I expect you, old Hickory—" and his look appealed to General Jackson—" know is pretty sharp."

" 'Spect so, massa," testified the General.

" The first lot which I shall offer for your notice, ma'am," resumed Selim, striking down an eager old lady, " is a valuable housekeeping one, comprising jugs, mugs, cups, saucers, bottles, tum-

blers, pie-dishes, pudding-basins, a coffee-mill, a soap-box, two canisters, a kitchen-poker, and a dog-kennel. Two dollars bid for this lot! only two dollars, a valuable housekeeping lot, ladies, going for two dollars. Ah! I thought so—two and a quarter dollars. Jugs, mugs, cups, saucers, bottles, tumblers, pie-dishes, pudding-basins, a coffee-mill, a soap-box, two canisters, a kitchen-poker, and a dog-kennel for two and a quarter dollars. Why the dog-kennel was never made for the money. Just hand round the crockery, there, and let the articles be seen. Ah! you woolly-headed nigger, you lay your paws on 'em if you dare. Has any gentleman got a revolver in his pocket, that I may give that black villain his fixins?"

"Me no touch, massa. Me no look at him."

"Two dollars and a half bid—three! Going for three dollars,"—cried Selim,

proclaiming an imaginary bid, which had an immediate effect on the eager old lady. "Three dollars and a quarter—and a half," pursued the artful salesman, with another effort of the imagination—"and a half—going for three dollars and a half—such a bargain, ma'am—jugs, mugs, cups, saucers, bottles, tumblers, pie-dishes, pudding-basins, a coffee-mill, a soap-box, two canisters, a kitchen-poker and a dog-kennel—this valuable lot for three dollars and a half—the coffee-mill would fetch the money in your State, sir. Ah! three and a half—going—going—three—and"—the old lady, just as Selim was about to try back, gave way—"three quarters. Gone!"

"I expect you won't ask much for yon rifle?" cried a Southern, from beneath his huge straw-hat.

"That lot, sir, airnt to come on just yet," replied the auctioneer. "We'll come to it by and bye."

“I reckon you’ll bring it on slick, stranger,” returned the Southern; “for I’m away by the first steamer. You bring it on now, d’ye hear.”

“You speak like a free and independent citizen, and my platform is the Union and no secession,” said Selim, eliciting a burst of applause; “therefore, I will take the lot at once, just to oblige you. It consists of this beautiful rifle, a dozen bottles, and a coal-skuttle—a truly useful assortment. Just hand them up here. You nigger, if you go within a yard of them bottles! Let him have the rifle—it airnt loaded. A dollar bid. What sport, airnt it?—a dollar for a first-chop rifle, a dozen bottles, and a coal-skuttle. Two dollars! Come, we’re getting on. That’s right, sir—you look it over. I see you know what a rifle is. *An old one?* All the better, sir. We can’t make such rifles as that, now, with all our revolving dodges. That rifle was

out in '14, when old Hickory—not you, you cat-staring nigger—made the Britishers walk. Three dollars bid. Four dollars. Four dollars. That rifle would 'most hit a man round the corner. For four dollars—four and a half,” said Selim, recurring to his imagination—“four and a half!” but the Southern was immovable, and Selim plunged on without bidders—“four and three quarters—five—going for five dollars. Your bid, sir, I expect, airnt it.”

“I guess I airnt such a tarnal flat, stranger,” replied the Southern.

“Whose bid is it, then?” asked Selim, with feigned surprise. “Ladies and gentlemen, I’ve lost my bid. Let’s see, I’ll try back. Four dollars!—your bid was four dollars, then, sir?”

“I calculate that’s the figure,” returned the Southern.

“Four dollars bid—four dollars for this most valuable lot!” cried Selim. “Four

dollars — going — going—I'd give three myself for the coal-skuttle—go—go—gone !”

“ Now I'll fix you, stranger,” said the Southern, the fortunate purchaser. “ You bid three dollars for the coal-box, and I'll give you the bottles in ; and there's t'other dollar for the rifle, and I calculate t'aint a very tall figure—that's a fact !” And throwing down a dollar, he walked off with the gun, amidst the laughter of the company.

“ I say, you !—hi ! stop him !” cried Selim, but the popular voice was on the side of the Southern, and Selim, after a moment's hesitation, thought it better to join in the laugh against himself. The resolution was a wise one, as the little incident, by promoting a general feeling of good-humour, gave a new impetus to the sale ; and when the auction was over, he had no reason to complain of the result. Besides, he added to his experience.

CHAPTER VI.

CROSSING THE BROOK.

ERNEST was not long content with his situation at the auction-mart. It was not that he could complain of the duties, which were light, and far from disagreeable, but he began to have doubts, from what he observed, whether the calling was really as honest as Selim had represented. The number of "alarming sacrifices" and "awful failures" paraded at the mart, in letters of Brogdignagian proportions, was indeed fabulous, and it soon became apparent that they were equally so in fact. Ernest ventured to remonstrate with his employer on a course so disingenuous, but

Selim assured him, in a good-humoured but decisive way, that custom had legitimated these pious frauds, without which no business could be carried on. The "slow dodge" did not suit the New Yorkers. Ernest could say no more: he only stipulated that he should be no way implicated in such "tricks of trade," and should be permitted to go altogether as soon as he could procure a more suitable engagement. In America, it is the employed who make terms, not the employer.

Sales did not occur every day, and sometimes, when there was nothing to do at the mart, Ernest was relieved from attendance, and allowed to take the day to himself. Then he would ramble into the country, in search of those delightful nooks which Washington Irving has made so familiar to us, but which, in the midst of daily transformations, a stranger is rather puzzled to find. Pretty spots, however,

he did discover, worthy even to be described by the eloquent Columbian, and here he loved to pursue his favourite study of botany, or throwing himself on the sward, under the shade of an umbrageous tree, to seek in Knickerbocker's history the scenes no longer traceable around. In an excursion of this kind, repairing one morning to a favourite haunt, on the banks of the Hudson, he found the spot occupied by a festive company, engaged in a pic-nic; and he was walking away, when a voice called to him, and presently he was overtaken by a young man of his own age, and of prepossessing appearance, who said that he was commissioned by a lady of the party to request his return.

"It must be a mistake, I think," replied Ernest, "for I am quite unknown here."

"Not so much as you think," answered the other, smiling. "My cousin, Miss

Meredith, came over from England with you, in the 'Jefferson,' and we are all much indebted to you for your attention to her."

Ernest muttered an incoherent reply; for at this moment, glancing at the group, he recognised the young girl whose acquaintance he had made during the voyage from England, and who had since occupied only too large a share of his thoughts.

Clara Meredith—for so she was named—had evidently given her friends a favourable account of him, for on approaching the party, he was received with kindly glances by all, and his reception by Clara herself was most cordial. Her father, an elderly gentleman of imposing appearance, introduced as "Judge" Meredith, shook him heartily by the hand, and made room for him between himself and Clara.

"Thus we admit you immediately to

all the rights of citizenship," he said, in an authoritative tone, being rather given to laying down the law. "It is the custom of our country, and one of the first principles of the constitution. Directly you land on our happy shores, you may claim the rights of a citizen, and equality with the foremost people in the state. Equality is the root of our independence. Major," he added to an individual on his other side, in an undress military uniform, "you must know our young friend here, Mr. Glynn—my brother-in-law, Major Hornblower, of the United States army, Mr. Glynn—a distinguished officer, who has had more tussles with the Indians in the Black Swamp territory than I have ever had fees."

The Major, a weather-beaten old fellow, with a military air, shook hands with Ernest, and forthwith proffered his tobacco-box, an invitation that was politely

declined. The Major proved to be of a musical turn of mind, and for the remainder of the day was constantly humming a tune, interlarding his observations with a fragmentary accompaniment.

“Very fine country this, I guess—*tum-ta-rum-tum, tum-ta-rum-tum*,” he said to Ernest. “Remarkable people over here—*tum-ta-rum-tum, tum-ta-rum-tum*. Double-quick time’s our constant pace—*tum-ta-rum-tum, tum-ta-rum-tum*.”

“We’re a practical people, Major,” observed a beardless young gentleman, “and that is the secret of our success. Our railroads, our steamers, and our clippers all denote it. We’re eminently practical—that’s a fact.”

“You mean you are yourself, Mr. Quince,” remarked a pretty, arch-looking girl. “To be practical seems the sole aim of your existence. I should not be surprised if you were to hit upon some

substitute for a corkscrew, now that foolish Pompey has come away without one."

Mr. Quince smiled complacently. "The fact is, Miss Maria Winchcombe, I'm always prepared," he replied. "A practical man always is. As to the corkscrew, that is easily remedied; for my clasp-knife contains, besides the large hack, two pen-blades, a rasp, a chisel, a corn-cutter, a sticker, a gimlet, a screw-driver, a picklock, a toothpick, and a corkscrew."

"A complete chest of tools!" exclaimed Miss Maria Winchcombe, laughing.

"The corkscrew! where's the corkscrew," cried several voices, gasping for a drink.

"You're rather in a hurry, I expect," said Mr. Quince, thrusting his hand into his coat. But pocket after pocket was searched, amidst the breathless expecta-

tions of thirsty souls, without result. The practical man had left his wondrous clasp-knife at home.

“Oh, Mr. Quince, you’ll lose your character!” said Miss Maria Winchcombe. “I declare, you’re as bad as Pompey.”

But the recreant Pompey, a sable representative of the great Roman, at this moment produced a corkscrew, and, in the diversion thus created, Mr. Quince escaped further rallying. The Major instantly proffered his tobacco-box to the dispenser of the liquors, and received as an acknowledgment the first magnum of sherry-cobbler, which disappeared down his throat like magic.

Meanwhile Ernest had been engaged with Clara.

“I thought you intended not to speak to me again,” said the fair American.

“How could you think that?” answered Ernest, innocently.

“Because you so studiously avoided me.”

“I could never be insensible of your kindness,” replied Ernest, “but to be frank, I am obliged to live very retired. In this country, one need not be ashamed to say so.”

“Then why *are* you ashamed of it? No one here will quarrel with you on that account, or think the less of you. We have a higher standard of merit than the dollar.” There was a touch of resentment in her tone, which she hardly sought to disguise, but in a moment her manner was again kind and *riant*. “But we must forgive you such feelings at first,” she continued. “You will have a better opinion of us by and bye.”

“I can hardly have a better; for everything I have seen here is great and liberal: besides which you give a home to the unfortunate of all countries, and provide them with the means of subsistence.”

“Such is the character I should wish my country always to bear,” said Clara. “Other nations may boast of their triumphs in war ; let America be great in peace. I’m glad you don’t think us such savages as English travellers report.”

“On the contrary, I see much we might copy with advantage—though, of course, there are some things at variance with my habits and principles.”

“And they are?”

“You mustn’t ask me yet.”

“Some other time you will tell me. I should like excessively to know.”

“But, perhaps, we may differ about them ; for what may strike me as singular you may consider very commonplace.”

“Oh, these are impressions you naturally form on first coming here, where everything is so different from what you have been accustomed to, even to our

system of government. But you will become more republican after a time."

"You think so?"

"I hope so," said Clara, as their eyes met.

"Mr. Glynn will never be a republican," said her cousin, who had been watching their growing intimacy with uneasy glances. "He has been reared under an oligarchy, and it is easy to see he is inoculated with its prejudices."

"You are mistaken," replied Ernest, "I have always lived under a constitutional monarchy till I came to America."

"You can't call England a constitutional country, when the aristocracy are the ruling power, and the mass of the people little better than serfs."

"You have a strange idea of our condition, sir," answered Ernest, good-temperedly. "It is the aim of our laws to give each interest an equal status in the

government, so that none shall predominate, and the experience of a thousand years attests the wisdom of the arrangement. England is the most ancient monarchy in the world, and promises to survive every other."

"That isn't giving it a very long lease," replied the American, with a sneer.

"Nephew, you are trenching on politics, which are out of our pale to-day," said the Judge, laying down the law in his most impressive fashion. "Such an overt act renders you liable to a suit for trespass, and if Mr. Glynn were a lady, I should mulct you in a forfeit." This announcement elicited a general titter from the ladies, led on by Miss Maria Winchcombe. "Silence in the court," pursued the Judge—and the titter was renewed. "Any lady who opens her mouth shall not be married this year." Death-like stillness.—"Nephew, you are

adjudged to make a bowl of your own particular iced punch, in your best style."

"Iced punch is a very smart liquor, *rum-ta-rum-tum, rum-ta-rum-tum,*" said the major. "Will you take a little 'bacco? *rum-ta-rum-tum, rum-ta-rum-tum.*"

Here there was a scream from Miss Maria Winchcombe, producing the greatest consternation among the fairer portion of the company.

"Oh, the snake!" "a rattle-snake!" was echoed by half-a-dozen voices.

"Where is it? where?"

Every one was up in a moment; the ladies, in a paroxysm of terror, all stood still and screamed; the gentlemen armed themselves with empty bottles, knives, and silver forks; and the panic was at its height, when another scream from Miss Maria Winchcombe, at the top of her

voice, brought all the gentlemen to her assistance.

“ There it is !” she exclaimed, pointing to a small spider on her dress.

“ What, that ?”

“ Yes.”

“ A pretty rattlesnake !”

Such a hearty laugh as followed this discovery, though two or three of the ladies, when they were fairly seated again, privately disseminated their opinion that Miss Maria Winchcombe had made much ado about nothing, and that “ it was all affectation.” But the iced punch, by its exhilarating influence, speedily restored good humour, and a proposal to take a ramble in the woods was received with unmingled satisfaction by the whole company.

Clara was turning to her cousin, intending to take his arm, when, happening to look up, the disappointment expressed in

Ernest's face arrested her hand, and the next moment she walked away with the young Englishman. Alfred Wilmore followed them with his eye till he was pounced upon by an isolated young lady, and carried off in another direction.

"I think this is one of the prettiest spots in our State," said Clara, as Ernest led her into the wood. "I remember it from childhood, and it was the first excursion I made on my return home."

"I don't wonder at its making an impression upon you," replied Ernest; "for it is not a scene to be forgotten. But, perhaps, you were not so very long absent."

"Indeed I was—too long. It was the last wish of my mother that my education should be finished in England, among her relatives—for she was a countrywoman of your's; and my father, though very averse to the arrangement, faithfully carried it out. I was away for three years."

“Then you, too, are almost an English-woman?”

“No!” answered Clara, proudly; “I am an American. When I left home my father was afraid my nationality would be impaired, and that I would return to America with a distaste for our institutions, but all I have heard and seen has only confirmed the predilections which he first instilled in my mind. America is the land of my birth and the land of my heart. I love her as she is, for what she is, and for what she will become.”

“Such a country may well command the devotion of her children,” said Ernest.

“And of her adopted children, too, may she not?”

“Certainly, if the adoption is mutual.”

“She has the same claim on all who seek her shores. If they find here a refuge and home, and an honourable career open to them, they receive from her the

succour of a parent, and owe her in return the duty of children."

"There I must differ from you. Unquestionably she has this claim on her own citizens, and on those who become so by naturalization, but not on mere sojourners. The world is open to every one, and we are at liberty to settle where we please, but we owe allegiance only to the land of our birth."

"On settling here do you not renounce that allegiance?"

"Not unless I become a naturalized citizen."

"Which, of course, you will," said Clara.

Ernest's reply was a smile, and the hold on his arm, which had made him feel so proud and happy, relaxed, though but for a moment. Just then they came to a little brook, meandering through the wood, like a stream of crystal, and as it babbled over the stones, with the trees spread

above, like a verdant bower, the charm of melody was added to the scene, awaking a corresponding feeling in both their hearts.

“What a retreat!” exclaimed Ernest, as he looked around. “It’s a perfect little Arcadia, where one might hide from the world and learn to forget it.”

“You would never learn that,” said Clara, with a glance at his manly figure.

“Why do you think so?”

“Because you are ambitious, and are formed by nature to take a part in it—because its toils and struggles, which overwhelm some men, are life and breath to you, and you require its excitement and occupations.”

“Admitting this, though only for argument’s sake, surely retirement, too, has its attractions. There have even been moments when I have thought it might be the happiest state.”

“ Those were moments of depression, then, and not the natural suggestion of your mind ; and, remember, he who would win the race must not faint on the road.”

“ No, indeed,” said Ernest. “ If success were easy, so many would achieve it that it would hardly be worth seeking ; but though the labour, the disappointments, or even the failures of life, may not give us a distaste for it, we may become disgusted by its meannesses and treacheries. They make the struggle insupportable as well as painful. Then we seem to be losing time, and to partake of the littleness and hollowness of things around us. At least, such reflections have occurred to myself, and have made me feel I required a higher incentive to action than the mere desire of success.”

“ There is the admiration success inspires, and the respect and applause of the world.”

“Too often masking envy and detraction,” observed Ernest. “Can we find no better spur than these?”

“The temptations of power or fame,” said Clara, “or the hope of writing your name in history, or winning a place in literature or art.”

“Great inducements, no doubt, but we may be stimulated by a higher motive than any they can furnish.”

“I should like to know *your* motive, then.”

“I don’t say it is mine, but it is one which might influence everybody. Human endowments are more equally distributed than is generally supposed, and exertion must have the effect of drawing them out. What higher object can we have than the development of our own faculties? Yet how many of us spend our lives in the pursuit of wealth, or worldly advancement, without attaining

our end, and quite ignorant of the gold buried within us, though it requires but an effort to lay it bare."

"Too many, I can well believe, but there are far more whom nature has never invested with these attributes. You assume we are all endowed alike."

"By no means. I think there is, as a rule, some approach to equality in the distribution of our gifts, but not in their character. What I believe, is, that they may remain unknown, not only to the world, but to ourselves, unless we explore our minds in search of them."

"Then, you adopt the conclusion of Gray, that—

‘Many a flower is born to blush unseen.’”

"On the contrary, I think nothing is designed to be unseen. To me it appears, we are all placed in the situation best adapted for the development of the particular faculties with which we are

provided—some of the moral, some of the intellectual, some of the physical; some to exercise their invention, others their virtue, others their endurance; and others, again, their physical strength, hardihood, or activity. But these faculties may remain latent, because we never suspect their existence, and hence it is often in our own hands to make ourselves very different beings from what we are.”

“Isn’t this a new philosophy?”

“It is not new in nature; for we observe every tree and plant, every physical and animal provision, adjusted with the nicest regard to its peculiar habit; and is it likely that man, the chief of all, should be left to chance? We must feel there is no state so degraded but it admits of self-culture, and none so exalted but that self-culture will exalt it higher. But here we are at the brook, and you will like to turn back.”

“ That will not be carrying out your principles. Besides, I’ve often crossed it before.”

“ But I’m afraid you’ll get wet.”

“ You can’t frighten me. I’m determined to make the attempt.”

Four or five stones, about a foot apart, formed a little ford over the brook, which was only ankle-deep, and the passage was easy enough, as by standing on the middle stone, Ernest was able to hand her across. But just as she reached the opposite bank, her foot slipped, and she would have fallen in, if Ernest, slipping his arm round her, had not lifted her up. It was not the first time he had encircled her delicate waist, and his heart beat quick as he raised his eyes, and thought, from her look, that she remembered the night of the storm.

“ Are you wet ?” he asked, anxiously.

“ Not the least.”

She smiled as he glanced down at her tiny feet, but at this moment she caught sight of Alfred Wilmore, who was watching them from the opposite bank.

“ Why, Alfred, what’s the matter with you ?” she said. “ You look quite ill.”

“ I *am* ill,” answered Wilmore, involuntarily pressing his hand on his heart.

“ How unfortunate ! I wanted you to help me over the bank.”

He made no reply, but sprang to her side.

CHAPTER VII.

EQUALITY.

ERNEST had another stimulus to exertion, beyond what he had mentioned in his conversation with Clara, and which, notwithstanding his silence, he had felt, at the moment, like a secret fire in his heart, and that was love—the noblest incentive, the purest, the best: which, in a mortal point of view, redeems us from the depravity of our sordid, selfish, and worthless nature. It was the same gentle influence of woman to which we owe all our impressions of good—the gentle guardian influence that attends us, through pros-

perity and through adversity, from the cradle to the grave.

The conviction that it was all this, if acquired by a sad experience, was not an unwelcome one to Ernest; for it afforded him both consolation and encouragement. He had come on to the great stage of life, eager to act equitably to every one, and, on all occasions, to deny and ignore himself if he could benefit others,—honest, frank, generous, and truthful, and that stern task-master, the world, had treated him with uniform perfidy, meanness, and ingratitude. Thus, as time wore on, his warm sympathies had turned again into his bosom, and he learnt how just and benignant is that counsel of Holy Writ —“ to put no trust in man.”

Well would it be were this bitter truth impressed more earnestly upon us, before we commence the great struggle, when we should perhaps be spared infinite pain and

mortification! But the maudlin sensibility of the day teaches another doctrine, equally at variance with the Divine revelation, and with human experience, and we are left to acquire the lesson as we best can. Full soon it forces itself upon us, and the bloom is yet on our cheek when we are grey in this seared wisdom. The employer we have served too well oppresses and wrongs us; the friend of our bosom, with whom we have so often taken counsel, has become a Judas; the man we have loaded with favours, is a secret enemy; the miserable creature of our bounty, bites the hand that feeds him.

Let us tear the mask from our faces, and hold the mirror up to them. Look on this picture and on this—on the man tricked out, as in a gala dress, in all the bravery of his professions, and on the same abject being shivering in the nakedness of his acts.

The spectacle is fruitful of admonition. It teaches us to be meek, patient, considerate, and forbearing: we are brought to estimate, at its proper value, the unbiassed approval of a good conscience—to understand that truth and honour are more precious than a petty advantage, and that to serve an enemy, when events have placed him in our power, is sweeter than revenge. If we do good to those only who do good to us, how can we maintain our self-respect?

Nor are we left to the hard ordeal without a helper. Man is false, but woman is true. Man sold the Redeemer himself for thirty pieces of silver, while woman—a woman defaced by guilt, washed his feet with her tears.

Without woman's gentle companionship, her endurance, her ministering tenderness—without her beauty of mind and person, her constancy, truthfulness, and

example, what should we be? How shuffle on this mortal coil, this dreary pilgrimage! From her we derive every inspiration of heroism and every generous impulse, from the moment that we draw nurture from her breast till she closes our eyes in their last long sleep, and only in her presence can we taste the poor lees of earthly happiness. Even Paradise, we are told, was lonely and cheerless, till it was graced by Eve.

It was this sweet, absorbing influence that now seized upon Ernest, imparting to life a new charm, a new object. Love, the one blessed passion of our nature, at once transformed, elevated, and inspired him, developing feelings and sympathies hitherto closeted, like a sealed spring, in his soul. He felt that he could encounter any obstacle, face any difficulty, endure any privation, to win, in return, the mistress of his affections. To her he

gave every thought, every hope, every wish. He dreamt of her; he prayed for her. Miserable man! thus to enshrine an idol in the temple of his mind.

In this impassioned mood he presented himself at the handsome mansion of Judge Meredith, conformably to an invitation from the worshipful functionary himself. Though studiously simple, the appearance of the house conveyed such an idea of the wealth of the owner, as was not calculated to encourage his aspirations, reminding him, in characters only too forcible, that between Clara and himself there was a great gulf, which nothing but a bridge of dollars could span. But when did such a consideration dismay a lover?—cheered, perhaps, by the flattering hope that his devotion is not unappreciated by its object, and the reflection that worth, not gold, is the precious treasure which woman covets! One thing

only he was resolved upon—that he would not enter the house under false colours, but at once tell the Judge, without circumlocution or disguise, what was his present employment, and that he had nothing to look to for the future but his own exertions. Then, if his visits were still invited, he might hope, in time, when he acquired a better position, to attain the consummation of his wishes.

The door was opened by a negro, who led him through a suite of rooms, all furnished in the same unpretending manner—for the Judge was a rigid republican—to an apartment overlooking the garden, where he found both Clara and her father.

We have said the Judge was a republican; and, in fact, with him the democratic sentiment was a passion, though only so far as it referred to his own country. In propagandism he felt no

interest, but rather prided himself, as he affirmed, that the constitution of America stood alone, and was thus the envy and admiration of the world. One of the articles of his faith was universal equality, and, to a certain extent, he really believed in it. He would have liked to stand uncovered in the presence of a king, and to have said, "I am a citizen of the United States." The only superiority he professed to acknowledge was merit, though it must be confessed, his eye, infected by our common taint, recognised it more readily when it chinked. But the sordid element in his character was now almost overruled by the influence of his daughter, in whom he had reared such a maiden as, in his mobilized imagination, he conceived had, at one golden period, adorned every household in ancient Rome. With joy he discovered, on her return from England, that she had come back to her American home only more wedded to the

sentiments he had made the creed of her childhood—with a proud contempt for monarchical institutions, and a devotion to those of her country. And in her these opinions were not set words, but real convictions—views to be carried out, and acted up to, adopted with all the enthusiasm of her sex, and made the ruling principle of her life.

Ernest was received with so much kindness and cordiality, both by Clara and her father, that he knew not how to make his intended announcement, and it was not till, on his rising to depart, the Judge begged they might see him frequently, that he forced himself to approach the subject.

“ I ought to tell you,” he then said, a little embarrassed, “ that I have come to America to seek my fortune, and, as I have yet to make my way in the world, this, perhaps, will prevent my availing myself of your kind invitation as I would wish.”

The form of the Judge's visage changed at these words. "Oh, pray don't let us interfere with your arrangements, on any account," he said.

In a moment all Ernest's hesitation was gone, and he stood in the proud consciousness of his own probity, indifferent to the coldness of the rich man, who, after seeking his acquaintance, now thought his humbler fortune a bar to further intercourse. In truth, republicans measure worth by much the same standard as we royalists.

But a gentler voice quickly soothed his wounded feelings.

"No, we will not interfere with your avocations," said Clara, "but I daresay you're not much engaged in the evening. You must promise, till you are better known in New York, to give us as much of your leisure as you can spare."

"You won't think I have much leisure

when you hear I am engaged as an auction clerk," replied Ernest, "nor will you, sir, have much opinion of my position."

The Judge looked straight before him.

"Papa doesn't understand you," said Clara, with a smile. "In his eyes every one stands in the same position, and under the same obligation—which is, to do his duty to his neighbour and the State."

"Every person," said the Judge, waking up at this reference, and proceeding to lay down the law, "is bound, when called upon, to render what assistance he can to the State, either by personal service or by aids of money. According to the constitution of this country, all males between the ages of fourteen and sixty are liable to serve in the militia, and may be required to appear in arms for training and exercise at the appointed rendezvous ;

also, may be sent to any part of the State, and by an act of Congress, may even be despatched into any State of the Union, in the event of invasion or threatened attack by an enemy. In such emergencies, women and children, too, may be required to devote themselves to the public service, according to their ability. It is the glory of our republic and our laws that every one owes the Union the same affection, and man, woman, and child may equally labour for the common weal."

"Nor do we recognise any differences of rank," said Clara, her eye kindling with triumph at her father's exposition, "rank is an exotic that does not flourish in our soil. Here we are all equal."

"Equal!" cried the Judge, "who can gainsay it? Who will dare to impugn the first truth of nature and religion? Place me before the proudest monarch in

the world, surround him with all the pomp and circumstance of power, and leave me penniless and friendless: and there, in the presence of his Court, in the face of all his splendour and might, I will proclaim myself his equal—yes, his equal, made by the same God, of the same flesh and blood, with the same impulses, feelings, and passions. Is he my superior because accident, not his own merit and exertions, has loaded him with those gifts of fortune?—rather I am superior, who do not owe fortune such favours, who have to do my duty in life without such encouragements, assailed by temptations which he can never feel! You admire his inherited magnificence, his borrowed plumes: I, if I am virtuous and honest, claim admiration for my poverty, my destitution! Equality! Is it because you have riches, and I none, that I am not your equal? No, I despise your

riches ! They are dross, dirt : you have sold yourself to them, and are not the less a slave, because your chain is gold. I, on the contrary, have preserved the independence of my mind, and am prouder of my rags than you can be of your velvet."

Clara clung to the speaker's arm, and looked admiringly up at him.

"Equality is the first principle of our constitution," pursued the Judge, more excited by his daughter's approbation, "our surest bond of union. Do away with equality, and the framework of our society falls in pieces. Without it we cannot live, we cannot breathe. No, we are all equals, we are all brothers." And he seized Ernest by both his hands, and wrung them affectionately, as he added, "brothers, brothers !"

"You are too kind," said Ernest, really moved by his phrenzy, and at a loss how to reply.

“Let us see you soon,” said Clara, as they shook hands.

“But pray don’t trouble if it’s out of your way,” cried the Judge, his dream of equality fading. “No, pray mind that.”

“We shall never expect you in the day-time,” said Clara; “evening is far pleasanter to us, and papa does not forget that my presence here is owing to your care.”

The Judge seemed suddenly to recollect the fact. “No,” he said, “I can never forget that. Come often—often;” and, with another cordial shake of the hand, he permitted Ernest to depart.

But it was not the Judge’s kindness that sent a thrill through his frame, and made him tread the street with the step of a giant. He still felt the gentle touch of Clara’s hand; he still felt—ay, *felt*, with all his strength and life, the glance she had turned upon him when he avowed his humble station—a glance which he knew

no riches could have purchased, and which was more precious to him than all the gems of Golconda. In that look he read her perception of his motives, her approval of his conduct. Did she, at the same time, discern his feelings towards herself, and comprehend her ascendancy over him? He flattered himself she could not be blind to the preference she had inspired.

Such was the slender anchor of his hopes—hopes freighted with his happiness and peace. He clung to a thread, which, if it snapped, would drop him into an abyss. His eyes wandered joyously over the radiant sky, while a gulf, unseen and undreamt of, yawned at his feet. Like the opium-eater, he indulged in ecstatic visions of bliss, unconscious that the glow which kindled his imagination was sapping the springs of his life.

He was now a frequent visitor at the Judge's mansion, and from being con-

stantly in the society of Clara, daily became—not more enamoured, for that was impossible—but more infatuated. Love coloured all his thoughts—it possessed him. He lived in the intoxication of Clara's presence; and when, day or night, was she not present? When did she not occupy his mind and light up his dreams?

Nor, to say truth, did Clara seem insensible of his devotion, or even unmoved by it. He had brought her to expect his appearance and his homage; and numberless little indications—the bright smile, the beaming eye, the happy and confiding look—showed that she regarded them with pleasure. And how she would fascinate him with the ardour of her spirit and her noble aspirations—with her sublime love of liberty and Utopian notions of republicanism, only too exalted, alas! for poor human nature to realise! And he listened like one entranced—as if the music which

so enraptured and inspired him were in her sentiments, and not in her voice.

But there was one shadow in all this sunshine, one drop of gall, as when is there not, in the cup of happiness? Whenever Ernest appeared Alfred Wilmore was at his side, like a phantom—like a ghost—yes, like a ghost! pale, sorrowful, heart-stricken, with hate in his look and desperation in his breast. In the midst of her triumph Clara would be infected by the influence of his presence; the eye too often engrossed by another, a stranger and an alien, would then turn upon him, the loved companion of childhood, with a gentle, affectionate, pitying glance; the accents swelling with joy, became subdued and faltering; and the heroine disappeared in the woman.

They were all at the romantic period of life, when our impressions, yet fresh and uncorrupted, are the most indelible, and

our feelings the strongest. The girl, ripening into womanhood, pure, amiable, beautiful; wilful, but not capricious; generous, loving, but with an unseen current of resolution and passion flowing in the depths of her bosom. The two young men, full of ardour and promise, endowed with every manly attribute, staking their all on a cast of the dice, which, like the game played with the demon, would seal the loser's perdition.

It was an autumn evening; the mellowed light, just revealing the first tinge of shade, streamed in at the open window, bringing the fresh, balmy air on its wings; and Clara, though a book was in her hand, was sitting with an abstracted look, when Ernest was announced, and, as usual, was followed immediately by Wilmore. The latter, though he affected a careless air, was even paler than usual, and a close observer might have detected an uneasi-

ness and constraint in his manner, indicative of suppressed agitation.

Having paid their respects to the Judge, who was too much absorbed by a debate in Congress to lay down his newspaper, the visitors devoted themselves to Clara.

"I have seen to-day one of the strangest sights of your city," said Ernest, as he drew a chair near her; "a public meeting, with women figuring as the orators."

"Mr. Glynn thinks women have no vocation but knitting," said Wilmore; "and would even deny them the use of their tongues."

"I could never dream of such cruelty," observed Ernest, good-temperedly.

"That would be making you a tyrant indeed," said Clara, laughing.

"Mr. Glynn has been brought up under tyrants," returned Wilmore, "and has become enamoured with the system, or how could he be an advocate for kings

and queens, and such obsolete absurdities, in an age like the present. Englishmen may prize their own old-fashioned customs, but I think they have no right to come here to laugh at us."

"We have too much glass about our own country to throw stones at you," rejoined Ernest. "But the practice I have alluded to is not one of your institutions, and I believe many Americans object to women speaking at public meetings."

"They have just as much right to speak as men, if they have anything to complain of," retorted Wilmore. "Would you have them resign themselves to be hewers of wood and drawers of water?"

"Certainly not, but I presume the American people have nothing of the kind in contemplation."

"I hope not," said Clara, archly, "or I shall be almost inclined to run back to England."

“Mr. Glynn must be fully aware I did not make this observation in reference to any feeling among the American people,” pursued Wilmore. “In America we know what belongs to every class and interest, and, above all, we cherish an honest devotion to women. And this is a feeling which we allow no one to impeach, or to trifle with.” And he darted a furtive look of defiance at Ernest.

“You are quite wandering from the question, Alfred,” said Clara, laying her hand on his arm, “which refers solely to the indignation meeting this morning. Mr. Glynn casts no imputation on our national gallantry, but, on the contrary, expresses the greatest confidence in it.”

“So much so, that I contend there was no ground for such an assemblage,” said Ernest.

“And I contend there was every ground

for it, if the persons composing it thought so," returned Wilmore, rudely.

"But the point really at issue is the right of women to hold public meetings," said Clara. "Now, if you are our champion, Alfred, pray make out as good a case for us as you can."

"Your case is already established by nature, which gives every human being a voice to denounce wrong, and to assert right. It is only Mr. Glynn who says woman should suffer in silence."

"I merely object to her demanding redress from the platform, because it is done at the expense of her dignity and her delicacy," said Ernest. "It converts her into a mountebank; and the familiar tones of her voice, which give such harmony to domestic life, become a public discord. Woman is too sensitive a being to be turned into a gazing-stock. Eastern nations cover her with a veil, so that no

man shall see her face; and, among us, she adopts one herself, the veil of modesty. She can never appear on a public platform till she casts that aside."

"By your account she is to express no interest in any public question—to have no political principles," cried Wilmore. "This is king-craft with a witness! You must mind what you say on these matters, Clara, when Mr. Glynn is present."

"I believe Miss Meredith is assured I always listen to her observations with equal respect and pleasure," said Ernest, with a resentful look.

"No one can dispute either your politeness or your gallantry," replied Clara; "and though it may seem rather ungrateful to Alfred, after he has pleaded our cause so well, I must say I partly share your opinions on this question. I think it must be admitted our sphere is the domestic circle. There our chief influence

lies, and it is there we have our public mission—a mission to incite the men of our family to discharge their duty as citizens, and devote themselves to the advancement of their country—to keep alive in their breasts the love of liberty, justice, and probity, and offer, in our own actions, a perpetual protest against all that is sordid and base. So far, woman owes a duty to the Commonwealth, and this she should never omit to fulfil.”

“I imagined you claimed a more prominent part,” said Wilmore, rather crest-fallen, “as you, with your grasp of mind and purpose, might well do.”

“You are learning to be a courtier, Alfred,” replied Clara, with a smile, “not but what there are seasons when a woman may with propriety interfere more actively in public affairs, as in case of invasion, or in presence of a national calamity. Thus Joan d’Arc became the deliverer of France;

the Maid of Saragossa fired the guns which defended her native city ; and Charlotte Corday, though young, beautiful, and amiable as an angel, dyed her hands in the blood of Marat, to rid her country of a monster.”

“And you would do as she did, if your country demanded it!” exclaimed the republican, eagerly, “would you not?”

“Yes,” answered Clara, resolutely, though the colour forsook her cheek.

She turned abruptly to Ernest, saying in a low voice, “Shall we have some music?”

And they walked over to her harp, followed with flashing eyes by Wilmore.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE COMPACT.

“You have never been at my house,” said Wilmore, thrusting his arm through Ernest’s, as they quitted the Judge’s mansion, “you must come home with me to-night.”

“With pleasure,” was the reply.

It was now dark, but the streets, as the coolest place, were still pretty thronged, and carriages were rattling about in every direction. The two young men walked along at a leisurely pace, Wilmore talking as they proceeded, in a strain which his companion thought rather incoherent, but seeing he was much excited, Ernest, to

avoid occasion for contradiction, made only monosyllable replies. At length, they arrived at a handsome detached house, and were admitted by an Irish handmaid, the usual portress in New York, and conducted to a sitting-room, which, by its style of arrangement and decoration, was easily recognised as the apartment of an opulent bachelor.

“ Sit down,” said Wilmore, as soon as they were alone, “ I have something to say which claims your serious attention.”

“ Indeed,” replied Ernest, “ I am impatient to hear what it is.”

“ You are a foreigner, are you not?” said Wilmore, as they took their seats.

“ You know I am an Englishman.”

“ You are my friend?”

“ If you will allow me to say so.”

“ You came to this country in search of a livelihood, and it has given you one?”

“ Well?”

“ Well, you, a foreigner, coming to my country for subsistence, and obtaining it, coming to it friendless, and finding in me a friend, have done me the greatest wrong which one man can do another.”

“ I can’t permit you to use this language to me,” said Ernest, rising, while the colour mounted to his temples. “ In what have I wronged you?”

“ I will tell you, tell you calmly, though you look at me as if I were mad. I am sane enough—collected enough. You English, cast out by your own beggared country, which can’t even give you bread, think no one equal to yourselves, but let me assure you I am prouder to be an American—ay, and a republican; and I think myself in every respect your superior.”

“ It is useless to continue this altercation,” said Ernest, with dignity. “ I neither proclaim myself your superior, nor

admit you to be mine. I have done you no injury, nor wish to do you any. As for your reflections on my country, I scorn and condemn them. Her own children she may, as you say, cast out, but she is ever ready to give a home to foreigners, and to none more readily than your own countrymen." And he moved towards the door.

"You don't leave me thus," exclaimed Wilmore, planting himself in the way. "I have not yet denounced your ingratitude and treachery. You may toss up your head, and fume as you please, but this room you shan't leave till I have done."

"Go on, sir," said Ernest. "You have claims on my forbearance, which you know how to abuse."

"You have not injured me, no!" cried Wilmore. "I was a child; I loved a being from whom I was never separated—who, even then, was dearer to me than

life. With her I grew up ; in her beauty, in her noble mind, in her great sentiments I saw combined all that I prized, cherished, and adored. She went away—went to your polluted country, and left me in despair. I feel now the kisses she pressed on my lips at parting—the tears she shed on my cheek. What I suffered in her absence ! How I thought, miserable libeller as I was, that she might be tempted to forget her unpretending home—be deluded by the pomp and wealth of courtiers and aristocrats. How I pictured her beauty ripening with her years, and drawing around her a host of heartless boobies, whose test of merit was a sounding title. But such vanities could not ensnare her ! she left America a child, and came back an angel.”

“ And you love her ? ” said Ernest, his resentment giving way to another emotion.

“ Love her!—love! that is a feeble term for my passion. I adore her, I worship her. And till you came she loved me, and would love me still if you were away. But you have stepped between us—you, do you hear? You ask how you have wronged me! Is not this a wrong? Was there no one in the world but my promised bride to attract you?—no heart but mine to trample upon?”

“ Do you say she was promised to you?”

“ Yes, promised to me—promised from childhood.”

“ By herself?”

“ By those who acted for her—by her father and mine.”

“ But she was no party to the engagement!”

“ If she was not, she shall be, and you, too, shall acknowledge it, or here one of us shall resign her and life together.”

He snatched a case from the table, and drew forth a brace of pistols. "Take your place and weapon, if you are a man," he cried, with frantic vehemence, pushing one of the pistols towards him—"An arm's length is sufficient between such enemies as we are, and, as you have blasted my happiness, you are welcome to take my life."

"I am not an assassin," said Ernest, restraining his rising anger.

"You are worse."

"Ha!"

"You are a coward."

In a moment the pistol was wrenched from his hand, and flung through the window into the garden.

"A coward! a coward!" cried the American, half raising his hand. But he did not strike. There was something in the attitude of Ernest, in the strong athletic frame heaving with indignation and re-

sentment, yet restrained by a nobler impulse, that held back his arm, though the blow glared from his eye.

“ I will prove to you I am no coward,” said Ernest, in accents quivering with repressed feeling; I will prove to you I am a man of honour, and, by treating you with forbearance and pity, prove too, my love for your cousin is greater than yours. You say I have stepped between you—that if I were away, your suit would succeed. I will give you this advantage. Continue your visits to Miss Meredith, and I will absent myself for a stipulated time. Fix its duration yourself.”

“ Do you mean,” said Wilmore, his whole aspect altering, “ you will go away at once without taking leave, and hold no communication with her till your return?”

“ That is what I mean.”

“ This is generous, noble.”

“ Spare your praise, and say what time I am to be absent.”

“ Would it could be for ever!” exclaimed the American, passionately. “ But since it cannot be—since you, too, love her, I will ask only six months.”

“ Six months be it, then,” said Ernest.

And before Wilmore could reply, he was gone.

CHAPTER IX.

CAMPING OUT.

It is a mad world, my masters—and a bad. But now and then, man's heart gives a flash of honest feeling, just as a flint strikes fire. It is an oasis in the desert of our baseness; a refreshing draught on our long and wearisome journey.

Who could imagine Ernest's misery, as he lay on his sleepless pillow. With the light of love streaming upon him, rejoicing in the promise of a radiant future, he had, in one moment, been plunged into the dark seclusion of his own thoughts. And how often does it prove so! Truly, in

the midst of life we are in death : when prosperity seems most secure, we are verging on our fall.

But there is one thing that will sustain us in this uncertainty—the conviction of a future, the conviction that, be our troubles what they may, life is but a span, and is bearing us on to the repose of eternity. Hereon hang all the law and the prophets, with all our poor human excellences of generosity, truthfulness, self-denial, honour. What is the momentary glow of success, achieved by evil or sordid means? The deadened conscience, the callous mind, may indeed be deaf, like the adder that stoppeth her ears, to the small still voice within ; but which of us, by our scheming or finessing, can add one hour to our term of life? Let us remember then, in the moment of trial, that to sacrifice our feelings to a sense of rectitude, is, in truth, to lay up soothing thoughts for the dreary

time of sickness and age, while a contrary course may procure a transient and feeble triumph, but will ultimately entail bitter self-reproach in this world—and who can say what in the dread beyond?

But the glorious rays of morning are falling on Ernest's bed, and he is awake and stirring. The bright sunshine, indeed, can bring no gladness to his heart, but peace he can seek from another source, where it is never sought in vain. And, in the open Volume before him, he reads the words which enjoin the course he has taken, "DO UNTO THY NEIGHBOUR AS THOU WOULDST HE SHOULD DO UNTO YOU."

The night, though sleepless, has not been lost. On his restless pillow he has sketched out a plan of action, by which he may secure a livelihood at a distance from painful associations. To-day he will leave New York, and start for the West, where

a projected railway, of which he heard but yesterday, promises a field of employment more congenial to his tastes than the ledger of the auction-mart. Soon he is on his way to Bowery, where he announces his intention to Mr. Selim Driver, who, having given him little more than lavish professions hitherto, offers to double his salary if he will retain his office—so ready are employers to mete the full measure, when, by such means only, they can return abundantly into their bosoms—so ready to defraud the labourer of his hire, when they can do so with impunity. Thus you, most potent, grave, and reverend seignior, have put money in your purse, while the Angel of Judgment has put tears into his bottle !

Ernest left the mart but a few dollars richer than he had first entered it. But this, in his present mood, gave him little concern, and the foolish, simple fellow,

actually felt sorrow at parting with Selim, who, under a mask of good-nature, had taken advantage of his trustfulness and necessities, to cheat him of his rightful meed. From such thoughts he was awakened, ere he had gone many steps, by a shout of triumph, accompanied by a hearty slap on the back.

“Blouser!” he cried, seizing his assailant’s hand. “Is it possible?”

Blouser, indeed, it was, buttoned up, as usual, in his pea-jacket, though the heat was torrid.

“All serene,” he answered, with an iron grasp.

“By dad, it is, your honour,” cried Pat Riley, appearing from behind, expanded from ear to ear. “It’s been rough enough comin’ over, but now we’ve got ashore, faix, the weather’s as s’rene as christial, so it is!”

“Why, Pat, you here too!” said

Ernest, shaking the honest hand of the Irishman. "But where's your can?"

"Arrah, then, your honour minds the old times. Sure, a can 'ud be no use in this counthry at all, at all, for it isn't beer 'ud satisfy the 'merrikees, small blame to 'em. Mr. Blouser, sir, it's yourself knows is the liquor good here."

"Stunnin'," replied Blouser.

"You still keep the pledge yourself, then, Pat," said Ernest, good-humouredly.

"What 'ud be ailin' me, your honour? Sure it's the finest thing for the stomach entirely, though, to spake truth, I do take a little, now and again, as medicine—just as medicine d'ye mind."

"Just on the old plan?"

"Och, no! I'm off the beer entirely, your honour, and if I take anythin', it's just the laste taste in life of sherry shoemaker—cobbler, they call it here, good luck to 'em, but, be dad, it's liquor

for their betters, every drop of it, so it is !”

“ Don’t you wish ?” said Blouser. And thrusting his arm through Ernest’s, he gave a whistle like a railway-engine, and they all walked off together.

Ernest now learnt, to his surprise and satisfaction, that Blouser was engaged on the very railway to which he proposed to offer his own services, and, in fact, was to set out the next day, from New York, to lay down a portion of the levels. He was overjoyed to hear of Ernest’s wish to engage in the undertaking, and proposed that they should go at once to the office of the Company, where he would introduce him to the agent. Such a proposition, removing all obstacles, left nothing to be desired, and, engineering talent being in great request at the moment, the agent, on Blouser’s recommendation, eagerly secured his services, and it was

arranged that he should accompany Blou-ser to the West, and assist him in fixing the levels.

It was a long journey, but a thousand miles, with swamps, forests, and inland seas in the way, are nothing in the western world; and at day-break they were on board the steamer—a huge locomotive Babel, as densely packed with life as the black-hole at Calcutta, or a cellar on Saffron Hill, and, at length, after bell upon bell had rung, the monster paddles struck out, and bore them away.

Away, between verdant slopes, dotted with villas and graceful woods—beneath impending crags and massive boulders, round the bluff cape and iron coast, again between banks, wide, wide apart, bristling with hoary forest, and stretching away in black and dismal swamp! Ernest could almost imagine himself translated to the pre-Adamite world—so different were the

scenes around, in all their outlines and features, from those of his previous experience. Here rose the towering sea-cliff, blackened with the history of millions of years; there the granite coast, thrown up by an earthquake, with the brand of its foundry, the awful volcano, still fresh on its face. Now it was the dark, gloomy savanna, where the Megolosaur, a hundred thousand ages ago, drew its body of seventy feet through the ooze—where the Cetiosaurus waded sluggishly along the shore, or gave battle to the timid whale—where, stranger than all, the Pterodactyl, the dragon of the air, hovered above, scourge alike of fish, beast, and bird. Or it was the eternal forest, the matted primeval trees, with their giant arms twined into each other, as if, in their united strength, they defied the puny enmity of man. Or it was the colossal river, recalling the wondrous streams of

ancient time, when England was the bed of a gulf, and France lay in the womb of an estuary.

What a spectacle ! all this would change —*was changing*. The forest, which had mocked the storms of centuries, was disappearing before the lumberer's axe ; the frightful morass would one day be a garden ; the blackened sea-cliff, now lashed by the billows, would, in a few thousand years, look down on a smiling valley, basking at its feet ; the gaunt staring rocks would be mantled with vegetation ; the ocean river would be choked up. How could Ernest look on these things, and think on his own tiny, fleeting, miserable griefs ? What was he, poor helpless worm ! in the mighty presence of nature, and her God ? Where would his thoughts be when the everlasting rocks had perished ?

Here and there a few houses rose up, as if they had lost themselves in the

woods, though little open spaces, clearings as they are called, were spread around them; then there were orchards and fields, a windmill or a sawmill; then signs of bustle and traffic, afloat and ashore, succeeded by a fair city, exulting in its youthful energy and success. Again, they are in the trackless solitude, to which the river, like a vital artery, is carrying a stream of life, nutriment, and vigour. Occasionally the steamer stops—now to belch forth its hundred at a city, and take up a fresh company—now to leave a few families at a village, or to drop a solitary passenger at a station. And now a little cleared space among the trees, with a log-hut pitched on the bank of a creek—branch they call it here—marks the spot where Ernest and his companions are to land.

One might think they had reached the end of the world; but this dreary spot,

far as it seems from culture and redemption, is in America, and, of course, it is close to a railway. At the first shriek of the engine, Blouser, to whom it is the nightingale's note, gives a responsive whistle, and in a moment they have taken their places and are off.

The line, traversing such an extent of country, was necessarily a rough and ready structure, but it answered the purpose intended, affording remote territories an easy means of inter-communication. There was no need to take immense sweeps, like our own railways, to link together a few ready-made cities, and it went straight to its mark, leaving cities to grow up round its stations. Wherever it penetrated, it was the pioneer of improvement, and brought civilization, traffic, population, and industry in its train.

At length our travellers arrived where even Americans had not yet found encou-

agement for a railway, and now they pursued their journey on a road of planks, which threw a bridge, as it were, over the virgin soil. On such a platform, a springless waggon, hired at a neighbouring farm-house, where they passed a night, was the only practicable conveyance ; but they laughed at jolts which very sturdy travellers would have deemed no ordinary trial. From want of drainage, the road was in some places a perfect sluice ; and often the planks were cut away, or sunk beneath the horses' hoofs, like traps, sending up a shower of mud, and almost pitching the vehicle over. Then they would come to a branch, with the water up to the middle of the wheels, and the horses floundered and splashed, as if they would never get across ; or at a wider stream, a ferry, taking first the horses, and then the waggon, bore them to the opposite bank, where the causeway of

timber again presented itself, and grew worse as they proceeded.

But now even the plank-road is ended, and a track through the interminable wood indicated by notches on the trees, is the only way remaining. Here no vehicle can penetrate, but a horse led by Riley, brings on the necessary portions of their luggage, and the two friends walk along together. Nothing opposes their progress but myriads of flies ; and, of all the creatures of the forest, they see only, at rare intervals, a solitary and bewildered squirrel, which flies at their approach. Frequently they sink to the knee in withered leaves ; and, more than once, the track is intercepted by a babbling brook, which they have to cross with bare feet. But the scene is full of interest, and at another time, the strange trees, the undergrowth and creepers, and even the weeds, would not have been passed lightly by

Ernest, but now his mind was pre-occupied, and the sylvan quietude only deepened his gloom. And night is coming on. The growing shadows, which follow closely on sunset, are thickening round them; the notches on the trees become imperceptible; and necessity and their own feelings alike command a halt.

They had arrived at one of those occasional gaps in the forest, for the existence of which it is impossible to account. Around rose the giant trees, dense and towering, like a cloud-capped barrier, and in the midst was the prairie, here smooth as a lawn, there covered with rank grass, higher than a horse's head. It was like emerging from a prison to come from the dismal wood into the freedom of this area.

Here they were to camp, and each proceeded, with eager readiness, to take a part in the arrangements for the night

The first thing was to unload the horse, and turn the spoils, abundantly provided for such an occasion, to prompt account, when a good fire was soon blazing, and a pannikin of warm tea, flavoured rather strongly with what Pat Riley called "turps," which strongly impregnated both the fuel and water, cheered and refreshed them. Nor did they lack a substantial supper, neatly dressed by their combined talents, though so many cooks, if there is any truth in the old adage, might have been expected to produce a different result. The insidious but soothing weed concluded their regale.

"We shall have many such nights as this, I suppose," said Ernest to Blouser, knocking the ashes from his dhudeen; "and many such days. But it will do for a change."

"Rayther," replied Blouser, in a lethargic state.

“ I could dispense with the bats, though,” observed Ernest.

“ Don’t mention it,” answered Blouser.

“ And the owls.”

“ Pretty well, I thank you,” said Blouser, giving the danger signal.

“ Arrah, be aisy wid you, Mr. Blouser, sir,” said Riley, with his merry laugh.

“ Sure, it’s time your honour was tied up for slape, instead of whistlin’ like a hingin’.”

“ What, do you tie Mr. Blouser up, Pat?” asked Ernest.

“ Faix, I do, sir, for he’s the biggest slape-walker ’twixt this and Tipperary, and, by the same token, I must buckle him on to myself to-night, so if he’s after strayin’ in the wood, he’ll give me the laste shake in life before he laves.”

“ Go ahead,” said Blouser.

One of his legs, accordingly, was tied to one of Riley’s, and the other secured to a

tree, so that he could not get off, if the impulse seized him, without raising an alarm; and all being now arranged, they disposed themselves for sleep.

But, Ernest, fatigued and exhausted as he was, could not close his eyes. The novelty of his situation, the excitement, the rugged companionship, the crackling fire, and the screams of the night-birds, combined, in spite of his weariness, to keep him awake, and his thoughts wandered to other scenes, and other days. Yet the calm, still night, with its benignant suggestions, soothed and consoled him. The scene, too, had associations, and even objects, which could not fail to attract and engage his attention. From the heart of that tangled forest, rising round him in a circle of darkness, he looked up at the countless stars, tracing them far away to the Great Nebulæ, which appeared like a fleece of light on the faded

sky, or he followed a flashing meteor in its awful course, as it spanned the heavens in a breath. Then his eye swept round the prairie, as if imagination again peopled it with its ancient lords, and gave them back their usurped hunting-grounds.

Such are the impressions which haunt our first night of camping out. Who can ever forget it? Who, in spite of its roughness and discomforts, would wish it effaced from the chequered page of his life?

But Ernest, worn in body and mind, fell asleep at last. It seemed that he had but just dozed off, when it was morning. He awoke shivering; the fire had gone out, and rain was falling in torrents.

“Arrah, but we’ll be able to fill the kettle now, sure enough,” cried Pat Riley.

“Here we go a-gipseying,” said Blouser, who had got loose, and was shaking a shower-bath from his blanket. “How are you off for soap!”

CHAPTER X.

THE UNKNOWN TONGUE.

BEFORE another day closed, Ernest and Blouser had reached their destination, and the next morning commenced work. In an old country their task, if properly set about, would have been easy enough; but in the wilderness, it was a different affair, and was attended with no little difficulty and toil. But they were not of a disposition to be daunted by obstacles, and, at length, they covered the whole of their tract, completing the levels to the frontier of Illinois.

Here they came in contact with the great American heresy, which was now agitating the West. The Mormons, on

their first migration to this part of the Union, had settled in Missouri, but after much contention and bloodshed, had been expelled from that State, and taken refuge in Illinois. A beautiful plain on the banks of the Mississippi, abounding in every product of nature, had seemed like a new Canaan to the miserable wanderers, as they traversed the wide, pathless solitudes in search of a resting-place. It was instantly hailed as the spot at which the Saints were to await the coming of the Messiah; and a special revelation to Joe Smith confirmed the general impression, giving directions for the construction of the settlement. A hill sloping back from the river, with a gem-like islet in its front, was designated as the site of a city, and the surrounding lands were divided among the faithful, in lots proportioned to their resources. Instructions were given for laying out the city, which, among other

buildings, was to contain a temple, a second Mecca, to be regarded as the centre of worship and holiness, as well as a large boarding-house, for the accommodation of strangers, and at which Joe Smith was to be permanently boarded and lodged at the expense of the community. A body-guard was also ordered to be raised for Joe, who was appointed mayor of the city, and president of the whole settlement, at the same time that he was invested with the command of the army; and being previously high-priest and prophet, the supreme authority, spiritual and temporal, was thus consolidated in his person.

The city rose like magic, as if the Divine hand had indeed given an impulse to the builders, but, in fact, it was but the impulse of fanaticism. In the centre stood the temple, a superb structure, though not transcending in magnificence that of Solomon, as the Mormons arrogantly

boasted. Ten thousand souls formed the population of the city, which received the name of Nauvoo, or Beautiful; and twenty thousand agriculturists located on the plain. The community now numbers nearly half a million, and forms, in a new territory, one of the confederated States of the Union.

The arch-impostor who originated the delusion, was a native of the State of New York, of obscure extraction, and possessing few of the endowments usually associated with the commission of a prophet. His character, indeed, like his success, is an enigma, and, as well as his capacity, was marked by some singular contradictions. Choosing Mahomet for his model, his institution is, after all, but a Brummagem production, transparent to the most casual observer. It is possible that the Arabian seer may have brought himself to believe in his own credentials, in-

asmuch as he sought to supersede idolatry by the worship of the one true God ; but no such plea can be urged in behalf of Joe Smith, whose great object was the exaltation of himself. What he has taught, he taught knowingly, wilfully, and deliberately, with a full knowledge that he was a charlatan and a knave. The one motive apparent from the beginning of his career, is self-aggrandizement, gain, care for his own safety, his own ease, comfort, and enjoyment. His success probably surprised no one so much as himself, and though he was not made for such a position, yet, by drawing out his innate energy and will, the position, to a certain extent, rendered him equal to its requirements. This showed force, not grasp of mind, though he was not wanting in a certain Yankee shrewdness and cunning, almost amounting to subtlety. His language was homely, but clear and

forcible, and now and then, characterised by a certain quaintness, which had a very telling effect. He would strike down an enemy with a sarcasm, more effectually than could be done by a blow ; and blows, in truth (though he laid claim to success as a pugilist), were not his favourite resource. He seems to have wished for pre-eminence in every vocation, and aspired to be at once a general, a publican, a prize-fighter, a law-giver, and a prophet. At times, too, like Cromwell, he could descend to be a buffoon ; and, like Nero, played the fiddle—not indeed while Rome was burning, but while the voice of humanity was crying to Heaven against his Gomorrah.

Such was the being whose highest notion of religion was to invest all things in a mantle of materiality—to clothe the Most High, whose glory the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, in the form, the

flesh, and the PASSIONS of man ; to efface from our nature all that is pure, virtuous, and good ; and reduce the holiest things to the level of his own base, vulgar, sordid, wicked soul. To what have we sunk, when such a prophet can find disciples ; when a profligate in morals, a defaulter in trade, a blasphemer of religion, openly preaching all these horrors, can niche his unholy image in the shrine of the human heart !

The people of Illinois naturally regarded the immigration of the Mormons as an intrusion, and contemplated with abhorrence the naturalization of the heresy on their soil. Such pretensions as those of the Saints, paraded with all the arrogance of success, were not calculated to allay these feelings, but rather tended to heighten and confirm them, and the rugged backwoodsman, with passions and prejudices easily aroused, began to look

upon the Mormons as personal enemies, while he knew them to be heretics and reprobates. The disciples of Joe, on the other hand, defied their enmity, and, to show how lightly they regarded it, appeared in arms to court attack. The Mormon militia, numbering about two thousand men, assembled on grand parade at Nauvoo, and were passed in review by General Joe Smith, attended by a brilliant staff, and surrounded by his body-guard, which, assuming the name of "Danites," or "Destroying Angels," swore to maintain and enforce all his acts. Such a display created the greatest excitement throughout the State, and but one feeling of indignation against the Mormons pervaded all classes.

At this juncture a man named Higbee, a seceder from the sect, brought before the Municipal Court of Nauvoo a charge against Joe Smith, exposing the infamy

and flagrant wickedness of his life, but the Aldermen, being all Mormons, and Joe himself the presiding judge, the case was, of course, immediately quashed. A Nauvoo newspaper, however, had the temerity to repeat the charge, supporting it by affidavit, and other evidence, very difficult to rebut ; but free discussion was not a thing which the Prophet liked, except when it was on his own side, and, therefore, the “ Expositor,” as the paper was called, was ordered to be suppressed, which was not only done, but to intimidate others, the office was burnt to the ground, while the proprietors were obliged to take refuge in the neighbouring city of Carthage, where they demanded redress from the authorities of the State.

It was on the day following the riot that a party were assembled in a large room of Nauvoo Mansion, the boarding-house before mentioned, where strangers, as well as Mormons, found accommodation

and entertainment. The assemblage comprised both men and women, several in evening-dress (such is the dandyism of the new creed), though others wore the everyday garb of farmers, with, here and there, a little addition of finery. A quadrille was being danced, in which nearly all the company joined, and a spirited strain from a violin furnished an appropriate accompaniment.

The fiddler was the most prominent figure in the scene. Lolling, rather than sitting, in his easy chair, his long lank legs stretched out in front, his head drooping forward, he might have been thought asleep, only that his arm kept vigorously in motion, sweeping over the chords of the violin. From the space covered, his form seemed gigantic, though his height, when standing up, did not exceed six feet. But the observer was most attracted by his countenance, which, though the features

appeared common at a first glance, was strongly marked, the eyes, if furtive, being quick and piercing, while the sharp outlines of the upper face disappeared in the full rounded jaw, indicating alike energy of character and unbridled sensuality. Although he had hardly attained the prime of life, indulgence, working out its own retribution, already told on his frame, and a paunch, with fat capon lined, was a portentous sign of growing obesity. But the most remarkable thing was to see such a man, dressed in a neat suit of black, with his throat encased in a spotless white neckerchief, and presenting all the appearance of a sleek, well-conditioned Puritan preacher, playing the fiddle for the dancers, piping for a flock of Saints, while several grave, rubicund elders sat by, smoking and chewing, in silent approval of the festivity. The fiddler was the captain and chief of the whole—Joe Smith.

“This is a merry scene,” said one of the elders, who, though older and stouter, bore a strong resemblance to Joe, and was, in fact, his brother Hiram. “Yea, a merry scene,” he repeated, in a snuffling voice, as the dance concluded, “and now it is manifest that we have our portion in a good land, and live a life of content. Moreover, our enemies have turned their backs upon us.”

“Who talks of enemies?” cried Joe. “If there’s any enemy of mine here, let him stand out, like a man, and I won’t ask the Saints to come between us. There’s old Campbell, of Carthage; he says he’ll riddle my skin till it won’t hold shucks. I wish he’d come here. I’d riddle him; I’d claw him. Shades of Samuel and Saul, if he touch but a hair of the humblest of the chosen people, he shall not escape like the dogs of Missouri, but he shall perish like Agag. Verily, we’re no longer lambs,

but are full grown, and now we'll show our teeth. We've got teeth, haven't we?"

There was a buzz of assent, amidst which several gentlemen produced revolvers.

"Oh! you've got teeth, you poor lambs," pursued Joe; "and what are they given to you for?"

"To bite!" replied a loafer.

"Brother, you've answered well," rejoined Joe, "and for this I make you one of the band of Danites, and your name shall be written in the sealed book. Come, let's liquor—drink of my cup, and be merry." And he handed him a mug of water, tempered by a lavish infusion of brandy.

"Now let's have a song," said Sidney Rigdon—a dark, sinister-looking man, who sat next to Hiram Smith, and who was one of the apostles. "General, sing, sing! Harmony and concord go hand in hand, as may be read in Proverbs. More-

over, you have a gift for song. You have a voice as a turtle-dove, which makes the heart joyful. Now pour it out like a trumpet !”

“ What shall it be ?” said Joe.

“ ‘ Job Jones,’ ” answered Rigdon ; and the whole company approving the choice, the song was given with great gusto by the prophet.

“ This is a first-chop song ; A 1, general,” remarked Sidney Rigdon, when the performance was finished, amidst the applause of the audience ; “ and it’s capable of a signification worthy to be noted. ‘ Job Jones ’ is like the poor deluded multitudes who drink the water of false doctrine, pouring the same into their souls to their own undoing, when they may have their fill of strong cordial in the church of the Latter-Day Saints.”

“ A good similitude, brother Rigdon,” observed Hiram Smith. “ Now I see it

is profitable to take a parable out of all things.”

“Wine is given to be made merry with, as is manifested in Scripture,” observed Joe; “so is brandy—so rum, gin, whiskey, beer, ale, mint-julep, sherry-cobbler, compounds, and all liquors, including tea, coffee, cocoa, chocolate, milk. We are coming upon times and seasons—nay, we are come upon them already, and these things should be understood. There are souls that require strong drink, and I tell you there are men in the church who can’t speak that which is in them till they are out-and-out drunken, because they haven’t strength of their own to contend against the wiles of Satan.”

As he uttered these words, a scream from one of the fairer portion of the company, at the other end of the room, drew attention to a witch-like old woman who had mounted on a table, where she

stood pointing her finger at Joe. It was Jail Bird.

“ Well, old dame, where are you from?” cried the prophet, with a composure that amazed most of the assembly, who never suspected the new comer was acting under his directions. “ You’ve got a bad arm—rheumatics, eh ! You’ve come to the prophet to be cured. You’ve found me out, have you ?”

Jail, in reply, made a convulsive movement with her hand, and then poured forth a torrent of her old gibberish, which passed among the faithful as the Unknown Tongue.

A general hush followed this incident, which was broken, at length, by the shrill, penetrating voice of Joe.

“ Ay, Frost !” he cried. “ I know him. A knave, is he ?—an apostate ! Verily, you are a witness to the truth, sister ! He is rightly named Frost, for

his heart and soul are frozen. Cæsar hated lean men, but, if there is any one I hate, it is a man without honest feeling—a man of ice, a man who sends a chill through you—such as this Frost.”

“This is marvellous,” cried Sidney Rigdon. “I expect the woman is one of the blest—a good soul, yea! But interpret, general, that we may all know the hidden things of her discourse.”

“She is for shooting him,” said Joe. “She says he is accurst, and all who have to do with him. Truly, it is a wonder! It shows what things are coming on the earth, and how the Saints should rejoice. Abraham, Moses, Jacob, Solomon, Paul, listen, if you can, on your thrones, if you have any, to this woman’s words, and you shall see cause to marvel.”

“We must take account of her report, brother,” observed Hiram. “If the man is a wrong-doer—and you know

him to be such—let him be expelled the city.”

There was a general murmur of approbation at these words.

“But hear the woman—hear our sister!” cried Joe, pointing at Jail, who appeared to be writhing in spiritual agony, but now gave utterance to another outburst, with the same effect as before.

“She asks for John Clinton,” cried Joe. “Truly there is such a man—and a good man—a saint and brother. Stand out, brother Clinton, and you shall have honour among the brethren. Ha!” he continued, as the farmer, looking more obtuse and stolid than ever, stepped forth from the background. “Now I see an honest man. This is a sort of man who would be tarred and feathered in Missouri, as I was, when that Judas, Simmonds Rider, sold me to the mobbers, at Father Johnson’s, in Jackson county. What it is to

live in a free State, in this great Union ! But our fathers fought for independence, and so will we. That Simmonds Rider, mark ye, took sick and died. He said that night, 'I'll gee you, 'tarnal roarin', Joe Smith.' Oh ! but who geed him ? Who fixed him, eh ?"

"I reckon he is fixed for everlastin'," said Sidney Rigdon, while laughter and acclamations broke from the company.

"But what says our sister, brother ?" said Hiram. "I think she would have you away. See, she beckons."

"Yes, she'll have me to the temple, and brother Clinton too ; I am glad he is come to such honour, just as Saul, the son of Kish, when he sought his father's asses. Well, I rejoice in heart at it, and am comforted, because I know brother Clinton to be a man of meekness, patience, godliness, virtue, faith, truth, peace, temperance, and charity. I know you're not like that ice-

bound, frozen, soul-numbing Frost, brother. Oh! what a wintry knave is that Frost! how he makes my fingers ache—that fellow!”

The farmer, though he listened with all his ears, made no reply to this exordium, but stood staring, first at Joe, and then at Jail Bird, in utter bewilderment and amaze. Jail seemed impatient at so much delay, and rushed with a frantic exclamation from the room, all the company falling back as she disappeared, though one or two, bolder than the others, were about to follow, when the prophet called them back.

“Stay all of you!” he cried. “But two of us are to go—brother Clinton and me; the rest remain and wonder.”

“Wonder! wonder!” cried Sidney Rigdon. “Brother,”—and he slapped the gaping farmer on the back,—“I give

you joy. This it is to be a faithful member of the Church : you will be shown a hidden thing. I wish Pelatiah Allen, Esquire, of Hiram, Jackson county, was here to-night. He gave the mobbers a barrel of whiskey to raise their spirits when they set to their manly work of tarrin' and featherin' Joseph Smith, junior, and elder Sidney Rigdon. Them were blessed feathers. General, them feathers will be our wings some day, when we fly up among the angels. But go ! go !”

“ Surely, I will,” said Joe. “ Brother Clinton, come—with a good heart and courage. Come ! come !” And he drew Clinton from the room, leaving the company silent and panic-struck.

It was a dark night, but as they passed out, a man thrust a link into Smith's hand, and they saw the figure of Jail moving on before them. But as they

approached the temple she disappeared, and Clinton, whose torpid faculties reeled under so much excitement, was wondering what had become of her, when he found her standing at his side.

“ There ! there ! ” she cried, as the prophet flung open the door of the temple. “ The words are in the book.”

“ The book—it is the book of life ! ” exclaimed Smith, leading the trembling farmer into the building. “ And see, it is here ready—read and understand ! ” And he threw the glare of his link on a reading-desk, supporting an open volume, in which, with protruding eyes, the farmer read these words.

“ Thy daughter, Jessie Clinton, thou shalt give unto Joseph Smith, junior, in spiritual marriage, and she shall be his wife.”

“ You see how it is with you ? ” said Joe. “ You will obey.”

“ Surely,” faltered the ashy lips of the farmer.

Jail gave a scream of triumph, and dashed the link to the ground, leaving the huge building in darkness.

CHAPTER XI.

THE STATES' MARSHAL.

THE Clintons, on leaving Glynnellan, had, in company with Frost, emigrated to America, and found their way to the Mormon settlement. This, with her altered religious views, was by no means the wish of Jessie, and she opposed the project as long as she was able, but, at length, submitted to necessity. Submission, indeed, had now become a habit with her, as if, by making it her constant aim, she had trained and bent herself to it. The light thrown into her mind by Ernest, directed by another and more precious Influence, had awakened her to a sense of her benighted condition, and shown her its

nakedness and deformity. She began to understand that religion was something more than words, although, at first, she could not seize its real character. But, in the repose and inaction of the voyage from England, her thoughts, inspired by the surrounding immensity—by the boundless ocean, and the ever-circling sky, had acquired a truer perception of the Creator, and had tried to lay their burden at his feet. By such means she had learnt the beautiful restraints, the discipline of religion, and these gave her strength and fortitude to bear their yoke, though they did not yet administer consolation. The flame kindled by human passion could not indeed be extinguished, but it was tempered by one purer and brighter, which, while refining and elevating her nature, in great measure directed her sensibilities into another channel.

In such a frame of mind she had arrived

at Nauvoo, and it may readily be conceived that, if she recoiled from it at a distance, Mormonism on a near approach, in its own stronghold, did not present itself in a more attractive aspect. The shocking excesses of its professors, indeed, were for a time, kept out of her sight, as was usual in the case of new-comers; but too soon the veil was thrown aside, and the mystery revealed. She now strove to open the sealed eyes of her father; but to him the powers of darkness appeared as angels of light. Despairing, at last, of reclaiming him, perceiving that her former ascendancy over him was gone, and trembling at her own situation, she thought of seeking safety in flight, but it required little observation to discover that escape was impossible, and that, once an inmate of that house of bondage, she was chained to a rock.

Frost, who had taken some land with

Clinton, and assisted him in its cultivation, was no longer importunate in his addresses to her, though at times he became ungovernable, and urged his suit with frantic violence. The character of this man was a strange anomaly, or, at least, appeared so, in connexion with his feelings towards Jessie. Even love could not transform such a Cimon in soul, as well as habit; and a passion like his—heightened, but at the same time envenomed by every repulse, could not overrule the mulish bias of his nature. But, undoubtedly, it was the one thing in his black breast that, if its ultimate aim was self—if it was blind, perverse, and exacting—was yet not brutish; and it was a marvel to see this bold, bad man, in spite of his paroxysms of fury, jealousy, and malignity, a crouching slave at the feet of a girl.

On arriving at Nauvoo, Frost, to whom

all religions were alike, had thought of embracing Mormonism, as a measure which could not fail to unite him more closely to Clinton, and, in effect, to his daughter; but Jessie's undisguised renouncement of the heresy altered his determination. His contumacy gave great offence to the Mormons, though they were ignorant of the cause, as Jessie, to avoid both dispute and contamination, never appeared abroad; and a hundred means of annoyance were resorted to, to make his residence among them insupportable. Another circumstance occurred, which tended to render him more obnoxious. Jessie, in an unavoidable visit to the market, happened to encounter Joe Smith, and from this time he haunted her father's house, and persecuted her with his addresses. It was not likely, with despotic power in his hands, that he would allow such a rival as Frost to stand in his way, and, accordingly, he took care to

heighten the bad feeling against him, while he adopted more direct measures for driving him from the city.

In a conjuncture so desperate, Jessie turned her eyes towards Frost with different feelings from what she had been accustomed. His companionship with her father, his rugged attachment to herself, long familiarity with his presence, and his detestation of the Mormons, were circumstances which, operating on a disposition subdued by disappointment, suffering, and religious meditation, began to engage her sympathies, while they seemed to invite her confidence. She sometimes reflected whether, with so many dangers around her, it might not be better, after all, to accept his suit, and find in his house protection and a home. And then the thought arose, that, perhaps, she might be able, in the course of years, to reclaim and humanize this man, and

restore in his soul the defaced image of his Maker. Such are the dreams conceived by woman, as if, by any process of manipulation, granite could be moulded like potter's clay, or base, sordid lead transmuted into gold.

And, amidst her long and anxious musings, did no other emotions agitate the young girl's heart? did no memories come up from the grave of the past, like shadows, like phantoms, to haunt and distract her? Alas, yes! How could it be otherwise? The passion that, long, long ago as it seemed—so greatly had she changed since—had struck her down, like a plague, in an instant of time, still retained its consuming fire. Religion had brought her quietude, resignation, but not healing. The freshness, the charm of life was gone. And thought would be busy, in spite of her womanly scruples, with that moment of delirium, that little

dream of mingled pain and transport, when all her affections had been awakened and deepened only to be completely paralyzed.

With a spirit thus wounded and broken, she awaited the crisis which seemed to be drawing around her, and which, in fact, was nearer than she supposed. At their first meeting in the morning her father informed her of his designs, in reference to Joe Smith.

“It is a good thing happened to us—a good thing,” concluded the miserable fanatic; “marrow and fatness, and corn and wine.”

“And do you think I will consent?” cried Jessie, her spirit kindling at the proposal.

“Consent!” echoed Clinton, with the glare of a maniac.

“Father! father! what would you do?” cried the girl. “Would you give over

your own child to——. Merciful Heaven! (and she clasped her hands, in an agony of supplication), pity! pity! Spare his grey hairs—and my soul!”

“What ails o’ the wench?” cried Clinton, thrusting his hands in his pockets, and regarding her with the same lurid look. “Airn’t it for your soul yor’n do it?—for a queen’s throne, and I’n sit an your right han’.”

“Ah, dear father! What you propose would be perdition and shame. This man already has—but, more, I will not, dare not say—I can’t bring my lips to utter! Yet, think, can this be religion? Look at the blameless, spotless life of Him who died on the cross! at his doctrine, his sweet and holy precepts, and ask yourself, dear, dear father, if one is like the other? Light doesn’t differ more from darkness; and if one is true the other must be false. I take my stand by what is virtuous and

good, and if that is false, let me perish in my error."

"To your own undoin'—to the undoin' of borth on us," said Clinton, stamping his foot.

But though he was more furious than she had ever seen him before, Jessie threw her arms round his neck, and looked up imploringly at his face.

"Don't say so, or think so," she exclaimed. "You are imposed upon. This wicked man has thrown his toils round you, and hemmed you in; but, believe it, he is an impostor, a man left on the earth to work evil, and delude many to their destruction. Let us fly from him. Let us go where we can worship God in peace and truth. Come, dear, and I will never leave you, but work for you, and live and die with you!"

"A blasphemer, an idolater!" cried the farmer, flinging her from him. "I'n see

how it be ; Satan, he'n want to stop this work, and set 'ee an' to do it, but shairnt speed. I'n beat he, and you too—borth an ye : Amen !”

“ This is said out like a man,” cried another voice—and Joe Smith stood before them. “ But we must be gentle and tender, as well as stout-hearted, for so saith the Scripture—‘ wise as serpents and harmless as doves.’ And this maid is one of us, brother—flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. Surely I will reason with her, and, if she speak wrathfully, I will give her a soft answer and good words, so that she shall be soothed, and pacified, and comforted—only let us be alone.” And he pointed to the door.

“ Don't go away, father ! Don't leave me here alone with him !” supplicated Jessie. But Clinton, receiving the Prophet's injunction as a command from Heaven, hurried out, without even looking

back. Then Jessie's terror seemed to vanish, and she stood erect and defiant, but still, motionless, as if she had been converted into stone. Yet, if all without was so placid, what a tempest of feeling was raging within!

"This is good," said Joe; "you are going to listen, and you shall hear words sweet as milk, in regard to those things which are in store for you—riches and power and might and honour."

"You have pawned your soul for these, and you think I will do the same," answered Jessie, with a look of scorn. "Wretched man! what will be all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, when you require nothing but a grave?"

"A good answer," said Joe, adroitly; "supposing I had spoken in a carnal and worldly sense, but my meaning was spiritual. And be you like spiritual-minded,

that we may discourse of these things with sobriety and modesty, taking all in righteousness."

"Righteousness from you!"

"There it is!" returned Joe. "The cavils and the slanders and the libels of the world lead you astray, so that you see light as it were darkness, and black as white. What said the Jews?—'can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' so, the Prelatists, Presbyterians, Socinians, Baptists, Anabaptists, Methodists, Seceders, New and Old Connexions, with all their paraphernalia of universities, colleges, missionaries, Bible-societies, and money-getting, pocket-picking, gospel-robbing tricks, say of Joseph Smith! Who is Joe Smith? What is he? Whence is he? I answer; he is a prophet. He works miracles; he teaches the poor, he instructs the ignorant, he comforts the afflicted. You say a man is to be believed if he has

two witnesses ; yet here are twice two—and twice two are four—and you refuse belief !”

“ Because your witnesses are false—like yourself and your words ! You preach sin, and you live in sin.”

“ The same old story again, and again, and again ! Yet I have a kindness for you, my sister, and my heart has often yearned to you, as a mother yearns to her child, because I know there is in you a secret spring of goodness, holiness, righteousness, wisdom, understanding, and virtue ; and I know, moreover, you are to be brought to honour, in spite of the stubbornness, wilfulness, and stiff-neckedness of your flesh. Yea, looking with the eye of prophecy, I see you brought out in the sight of the people, in raiment of purple and gold, and all men look on wondering, and say, lo ! she is fair, she is comely, she is holy ; she is meet

to sit on a throne, and to be unto us as Esther, a queen, and a ruler over many."

"I listen to you too long," said Jessie, shuddering. "What you say horrifies, instead of deluding me, and I tremble to hear you speak. Oh! if you have any pity—if you have any human feeling, relinquish this persecution. You can never—you never *shall* succeed; for rather than submit to a fate so terrible, I would die the most cruel of deaths."

"Ha!" exclaimed Joe, fiercely. But he checked his rising anger, adding—"Die is easily said, but not so done. You still see things carnally. Wake up your spirit, look on things spiritually, and you never die, for then the spirit immortalises the flesh. This is what I will bring you to, and in that time, you shall indeed be a spirit, and my spiritual bride, in the world present, and the world to come. Not now—not now: we are interrupted."

As he spoke, the door was flung open, admitting three formidable-looking personages, one of whom coolly drew forth a revolver.

“ Mr. Joseph Smith, junior, I expect ? ” said this individual.

“ Well,” replied Joe, turning very pale.

“ Well, Mr. Joseph, I’m a States’ Marshal, and I’ve got a little bit of paper here from the Governor of Illinois, requiring me to lodge you in Carthage gaol—that’s all.”

“ And you think I’ll go,” said Joe. “ Oh, yes ; I’m a lamb ; but I’ve got teeth—a few. I’ve got an army now, Mr. States’ Marshal. Nice States, verily—nice independent, free, States, with a glorious constitution—yea, for Methodists, Seceders, Campbellites, and all other lights, except the true lights—the church of Latter-Day-Saints on earth. And so you think I’ll go with you ? ”

“ If you don’t, I’ll blow your brains out,” answered the Marshal, complacently.

“ Ho ! ho ! help !” cried Joe, at the top of his voice.

“ Hilloa, what’s the matter ?” cried another voice, and a person entered from the street.

It was now Jessie who uttered an exclamation, but it was denotive as much of joy as surprise.

“ Jessie ! is it possible ?” cried Ernest Glynn—for the new comer was no other. Jessie burst into tears.

“ Come, Mr. Joseph, all this is nothing to us,” said the States’ Marshal. “ Come away quietly, and you’ll perhaps be safer in Carthage gaol than you will be here. You’ll have fifty thousand men round this location before night. Now, there’s my coach at the door, and all you have to do is to step in, and go off to gaol like an independent citizen.”

“ But—”

“ There’s no but in the case. If you don’t go, I’ll shoot you—that’s a fact. There, come along.”

And seizing the arm of the paralyzed prophet, he half dragged him to the coach, and forcing him in, the vehicle proceeded at a furious pace down the street.

CHAPTER XII.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

THE capture of Joe Smith had been effected so expeditiously, and so adroitly, that Jessie could hardly believe in her deliverance, and even when he was gone, stood quivering with terror. Nor was her agitation diminished by the sudden appearance of Ernest, though from this, she had been animated by far different feelings.

“Come, take courage, Jessie,” said Ernest, cheerily; “you are now safe.

“I shall never be safe here,” she replied, in trembling accents.

“Why not? Isn’t your father with you?”

“ My father ! He is more powerless than myself—in more peril. The dupe and tool of that impostor.”

“ And you are not ! What a satisfaction is that, Jessie !—to myself, no less than you.”

To *him* ! Did he, then, still care for her—still feel an interest in her ?

“ To you I owe it !” she said tenderly. “ It was you who first showed me his true character. You rescued my body from his deluded followers, and then taught me how to reclaim my soul.” And her soul seemed to gleam from her eyes as she spoke.

But if Ernest saw in that glance what was the real nature of her feelings towards him, a voice within, small and still (but with him how potent !) repeating her sad and touching words, taught him to regard such a result as a calamity, rather than a triumph, awaking no response but a pang.

“ We are all in the hands of a higher Power, Jessie,” he replied ; “ and next to that, you have to thank your own good sense and good feeling for your deliverance. These you must still exert, if you would escape from this den.”

“ But my father !” cried Jessie, despairingly ; “ nothing can move him, and he looks on this man as little less than a god.”

“ The more reason why you should not remain under his control ! You must fly—and why not at once, before the panic which Smith’s apprehension will excite subsides ?”

He spoke so eagerly, and with so much earnestness and affection, that a new impression flashed on Jessie’s mind. He asked her to fly at once—*at once !* then it must be with him ! A film seemed to fall from her eyes, and from her heart ; and she thought, in her mad frenzy, that, after

all, he might love her. Duty, self-command, religion—all paled before that strong delusion, and she felt only the glow of her own mortal, treacherous, and now guilty passion.

“ I am ready to go this instant,” she replied, quickly, her whole face lighting up as she spoke—“ only tell me where.”

“ Anywhere out of Nauvoo you will be safe,” answered Ernest, “ I will escort you to New Orleans, where you can establish a home for yourself by your own industry—a home protected by the laws, which no one will dare to violate.”

His purpose was now but too clear, and all Jessie’s brightness vanished.

“ Yes, yes, thank you, I will,” she said, scarcely able to check her tears. “ But now I reflect, I had better try once more to move my father, and if possible, persuade him to go too. Nor would escape be so easy as you imagine.

"You hear what a commotion is in the street."

Hurried steps and sounds without, indeed, indicated no ordinary disturbance, but hardly had they become sensible of the fact, when they were startled by the entry of Frost. An imprecation broke from him as he discovered Ernest.

"Have you followed us here, then?" he cried, with a murderous look. "Can't you even leave the girl quiet, when she's placed the sea between you?"

"It is you who will not leave me quiet—who madden me," said Jessie, though more in a tone of reproach than anger. "And you think he is like yourself!"

"As far as I am concerned, he may say what he pleases," said Ernest, "but I caution him not to reflect upon you. It is only on your account I condescend to tell him my presence here is accidental—

that I was ignorant of your being in Nauvoo, or in America, till I entered this room, where I was brought by a cry for help."

"Who was mellin' of her, then?" demanded Frost, with a scowl.

"No one, at that moment," answered Ernest. "The outcry was raised by the villain Smith."

"Joe Smith! Why, he's nabbed—gone off to gaol."

"It was here he was apprehended," returned Ernest.

"Oh!" drawled Frost. "You know, then," he added to Jessie, "your father's took with him."

"No: you say this to terrify me," faltered Jessie.

"I'm like to do that, aint I; I tell you he's off in the same coach with him. He was took at the Mansion-House, along with Hiram. The warrant was against

all three, for setting fire to the 'Expositor' office, and the mobbers swear they shall swing for it."

A mist came over Jessie's eyes, and she would have fallen, if Ernest had not placed her in a chair.

"Why do you tell her this, knowing it to be false?" he said to Frost. "Don't give way, Jessie," he added; "I am, of course, ignorant how far your father is guilty, but he is under the protection of the law, and before he is punished, he must be brought to trial."

"You're misleading her, boy; blinding her, and sending her astray," cried Frost. "I tell her the truth, and it is to tell the truth, and the whole truth, I came here. Then she may judge whether she will help her father or no."

"Can I help him?" exclaimed Jessie. "Only tell me how, and if it is to lay down my life, I will do it."

“Stuff!” said Frost. “I don’t want your life, and you know that well enough. You know what I want.”

Jessie passed her hand before her eyes.

“*What* do you want?” said Ernest; “name it, if you can serve her, and anything reasonable you shall have. Gold, if you wish,” and he drew forth his purse, “as far as my poor means will go.”

“Keep your gold, my lad, till you’re asked for it,” said Frost, insolently. “You’ve got but little, I make no doubt. You talk of old Clin being brought to trial. Why, he was brought to trial last night, and the two Smiths with him, and the judge as tried ’em is rather a queer customer. You’ve heard of him, I dare say—most people’s heard of Judge Lynch.”

Jessie uttered a cry.

“Well, Judge Lynch has condemned these men to death—old Clin being one. Now do you understand? As for what I

want of this lass, that's my business, and if you'll leave us to ourselves, we'll come to a settlement, one way or t'other, in a twinklin', without your puttin' in your spoke."

"I won't interrupt your conference," said Ernest; "only remember, while I am within reach I will protect her from injury and insult, let it be offered by whom it may." And he moved towards the door.

"Stay," said Jessie. "I know what he would say—what he demands. If he will try to effect my father's release, I—I—" the words seemed to stick in her throat, but she made an hysteric effort—"I consent."

"Consent?" cried Ernest. "To what?"

"To be his wife!"

"You hear her!" exclaimed Frost, clapping his hands, while an oath burst from his lips. "You are a witness—*you*, mind!

I'll hold you to this. Yes, by ——." And another oath rang in their ears.

"Will you give yourself to this man?" said Ernest, seizing Jessie's arm, and looking steadfastly in her face.

"Not myself, but what I have to give —my hand, my life, if he will deliver my father. I will be his wife, and try to do my duty by him."

"That's enough—that's all I want," cried Frost, exultingly. "Don't say any more now. I'll be off at once, and see how I'm to set to work, and young squire here may come with me if he will. But you keep close, Jess, and to-morrow we'll have you off to New Orleans, for there'll be bloody work in Nauvoo before long." Turning abruptly to Ernest, he added, sullenly, "Will you come?"

"I must know, first, how you intend to accomplish your object," said Ernest."

"That I've got to think on," returned

Frost. "I don't know all that's in the wind yet, but I'm on the Committee—we have Vigilance Committees in this independent country, and I'll soon find out. You may be of use, if you've a mind to."

"Enough," said Ernest. And, taking leave of Jessie, he accompanied him from the house.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BACKWOODS.

A LIGHT cart was at the door, and Ernest jumped in, while Frost took a seat at his side, and drove off.

For the moment they maintained an appearance of companionship, if not friendship, but, in their hearts, each had a rooted mistrust of the other. Ernest could feel no confidence in one who, from all that had come to his knowledge, he believed to have wantonly injured him in time past, and the remembrance of that injury rankled in Frost's breast as if his companion had been the offender, and the wrong

had been inflicted on himself. Nor was there wanting another element to fan his smouldering hatred—the unwelcome and distracting reflection, to which he could not shut his eyes, that, while promising to become his wife, Jessie, in her blind infatuation, had unsolicited given Ernest her love, and thus even his success was embittered by the triumph of his rival.

I remember, when a child, a man luring me with gentle words and caresses, to a secluded spot, almost as dreary as his own black heart. This man was a murderer, and while he pressed the child's trusting hand—while he beguiled him with accents of love and affection, intended here to consummate his crime, his only inducement being, what in him silenced every feeling of nature, the pittance given at the dissecting-room for the lifeless body.

And now, as the road entered the forest, the demon of jealousy suggested a

similar course to Frost. The words of fellowship were on his lips, while murder was in his heart. It was as if two brothers sat side by side, and one of them was Cain. At first, indeed, Frost recoiled from the thought. But the Tempter, who knew him better than he knew himself, held it up again, and now he looked it in the face. It was true, he could never be secure while Ernest lived. Jessie might become his wife, but she would remain his rival's slave. In that case, what might not happen? what might not already be planned? Ernest's appearance, after all, might be the result of a preconcerted understanding, and the story of his encounter with Joe Smith a fabrication. No doubt of it! How could he give it a moment's credence? And here he might end all his doubts, and effectually avoid future misery. Ernest, a stranger in the country, without friends or connexions,

would never be missed, and even if he were, a period of popular commotion would account for his disappearance. A single bullet was all that was required, and his body, left in the depth of the forest, would tell no tales. He might easily assign a reason for his absence to Jessie, and thus make it effective in another way, as his apparent desertion of her, at a time when she needed help, would, perhaps, at length have the effect of estranging her from him. But why did he hesitate? why let the auspicious moment slip by? He laughed, he joked, he sang out wild snatches of song, but all this time, the one burning, blighting thought was in his mind. At last, he drew forth a pistol; his hand was on the trigger; his mind was made up; and at the first favourable spot he would fire.

But, whatever sceptics may think, we are surrounded, in our way through life,

by an overruling Providence, which watches alike over the strong man and the helpless, unsuspecting child. As with the Burker in Willow Walk, so it was with Frost. He was just raising the pistol, when a rustling in the undergrowth, close to the road, though it proved to be only a buzzard, restrained his hand; again, and the sound of horses' hoofs rang on the road behind; again, and two men appeared in front, who, as they drew nearer, gave a shout of recognition to Ernest, and turned out to be Blouser and Pat Riley.

“ Troth, it's a trate to see your honour,” cried Pat, “ and it's yourself, savin' your presence, me and Mr. Blouser was just lookin' after. There's a beautiful breeze gettin' up, sir, and I b'leive the whole country's listed in the m'litia. The Mormors, bad luck to 'em, 'ull get a bellyful this time, any way.”

“ Such a go,” said Blouser. “ All round my hat, and no mistake.”

“ There is indeed no doubt it will be a bad business,” observed Ernest.

“ We tried to get horses to come on to you quick, sir,” resumed Riley, “ but be-dad, we could’nt so much as get asses, though I b’lieve they’re as plenty here as in the ould country, every bit. But, by this and by that, I hope we’ll have a slap at the Mormors ourselves, for I hear Father O’Sullivan say, they’re as big a set of blackguards as you’d wish to mate.”

“ I’m afraid he’s given their true character, Pat,” returned Ernest, “ but we’ve no business to take part with either side, and my advice to you is, to keep clear of them both.”

“ Right again,” said Blouser, nodding his head.

“ By the hole in my coat, if there’s a skrimmage on foot, sir, I couldn’t keep out

of it, for the life of me," observed Pat—" 'specially, if it's to bate the Mormors—the murderin vagabones."

" Then we must send you out of the way," said Ernest. " But come, Blouser, you and Pat had better jump up, and we'll go back to Carthage together."

" That's as I please," remarked Frost, sullenly, for the first time breaking silence.

" All serene, guv'nur," cried Blouser, jumping in behind, " go ahead."

" Arrah, but don't you be after fallin' down like the shay," said Pat, following his leader into the cart.

" A shay down?" cried Frost, with sudden interest.

" Reg'lar," answered Blouser. " Two beaks and three coveys spilt,"

" Whereabouts, and when?" inquired Frost.

" 'Troth, it was just below here, at the

branch, my man, and if you don't mind, you'll be after doin' the same trick yourself," said Riley. " But I b'lieve they've gone on to the public now, small blame to 'em."

Frost, without making a reply, here lashed the horse into a gallop, notwithstanding that Blouser gave the danger signal, and Pat Riley, at the top of his voice, sang out, " Tare-an-oons, be aisy wid you, or by the hocus-pocus, you'll be dancin' on your head, instead of your heels, before long, so you will."

The cart, indeed, on reaching the branch had a narrow escape, as it bounced into the shallow water, but righted directly, and, gaining the opposite bank, Frost drew up before a wooden cabin, with a smithy adjoining, where a close chaise, which he recognised as the States' Marshal's, was undergoing repair.

" Now we've got the game in our own

hands," he said to Ernest, aside. "If your chums 'ull stand by you, we can bring old Clin off scot free."

"Neither they nor I will join in any such project," replied Ernest. "I will aid you to the utmost in protecting this deluded man from the mob, or even in doing everything that can fairly be done to procure his release, but here my co-operation must end. I will never interfere with the course of justice, much less join in an attempt to rescue a criminal."

"And that's all you'll do, is it?" said Frost. "I would n't give much for your help, then."

With a muttered oath, he stalked into the public, while Ernest, who had alighted at the same time, followed close behind, though more to observe than act.

Four or five loafers were grouped round a table near the door, talking in an under tone to each other, and in an opposite

corner sat the States' Marshal, apparently absorbed in discussing some bread and cheese, while the host and his daughter, a buxom Missouri lass, stood behind the bar, or rather counter—for the place combined the resources of a liquor-shop with those of a general store. Ernest looked round for the prisoners, but the Marshal, well knowing the popular feeling respecting them, had, as a measure of precaution, secured them in the inner room, under charge of his assistants, and only waited till the coach should be prepared to resume his journey.

The loafers looked rather suspiciously at the new comers, but a gesture from Frost as he approached the table—the secret sign of the Vigilant Committee, completely reassured them.

“He’s here,” said one.

“Who do you mean?” replied Frost.

“Tarnal, roarin’ Joe Smith,” observed

another, "and I hope the buzzards 'ull eat me, if I don't riddle his skin till it won't hold shucks. I've swore to it, airnt I, boys."

"We've all swore," said the first speaker, "speshly Campbell."

"Now, the job is, how we're to do it," resumed Campbell. "Gov'nor Sykes give a pledge he'll set Nauvoo a-fire to-night, and serve it like old Jerusalem, so as one stone shan't stand on another. As for these chaps here, they're in a fix, I tell you. I've been out, and done such damage to the shay, it can't be patched up no how. But the thing is"—he looked across the room, but the Marshal, whose observation he apprehended, had just vanished through the inner door—"The thing is, as all the militia 'ull be away with the Gov'nor, shall we join the Vigilants at Carthage, and hang the tarnal nigger there, or pounce on him now, and give

him a hoist in the woods. I'm for goin' at it right away—slick. Let's liquor." And after a hearty draught from his mug, he handed it to Frost.

"We're all o' the same mind," said another loafer; and his comrades assented.

"But there's three of 'em," observed Frost. "What will you do with t'other two?"

"Hiram 'ull swing with him," answered Campbell. "I don't know third chap, but the Marshal may keep him, if he will, or he may take a jump on nothing along of Joe."

"I'd rather take him off in my cart to Carthage, and give him up to the Committee," said Frost.

"So you may, if you like," answered Campbell.

"Well, if we're goin' to do it, we'd better begin," said Frost. "But we must

lay a plant, or we're like to get more kicks than cents."

"Don't fret, neighbour," returned Campbell, "that's fixed, I reckon. Bob here 'ull go and tell the smith, and he'll come and say the shay's ready: then, as they're walkin' out, me and Jack 'ull come behind the Marshal and his men, and if we don't streak 'em it's a pity."

"That cock won't fight; I tell you," said the Marshal, who had approached unobserved.

"Ho! you're there, air you?" answered Campbell.

"That's about it," was the reply.

"And what dodge air you goin' on now?"

"What do you think?"

"Not knowin', can't say," growled Campbell.

"Well, while you've been laying your heads together here, I've been in the other

room and lugged my men out of the window ; and, as you'd settled the chaise, I've put 'em in your mate's cart. They're strung together behind like calves, and if you come to the door, you'll see my subs drive 'em off."

Instantly there was a rush from the house, just in time to see Frost's cart, with the three prisoners huddled in the bottom, gallop away.

" Hooray !" cried Blouser, in high glee at the trick.

" Ho ! you're in it, air you ?" exclaimed Campbell. " Well, you airnt a functionary : so there !" — And making a dart at his eyes, he tried to gouge him, but Blouser avoided the attack, at the same time administering a severe blow in return.

" Crack 'em and try 'em before you buy 'em," he said. " Will you buy, buy, buy, buy ?"

“ Troth, he can’t afford it, nohow, with his small mains,” cried Pat Riley, laughing.

Campbell drew his bowie-knife, but Blouser, with the same coolness and promptitude, producing a revolver, his assailant held back, and the affray ended in empty threats on one side, and defiance on the other.

Meanwhile, Ernest, alarmed at what he had heard respecting the approaching attack on Nauvoo, resolved to return to that city, and see to the safety of Jessie, feeling no interest in the fate of her father, except so far as it involved her. He communicated his intention to Blouser and Riley, who readily agreed to bear him company, and having tried, by a tempting offer of dollars, to procure some means of conveyance, but without success, nothing remained but to proceed on foot.

“ So you’re goin’ to hark back,” said Frost, as Ernest was leaving the cabin.

“ I’m returning to Nauvoo, to rescue this poor girl, and place her out of reach of violence,” answered Ernest. “ I shall take her to New Orleans, where you can bring her father, if you obtain his release.”

“ If you go back, I go back. A likely thing I’ll give my wife over to you.”

“ She’s not your wife yet, and never will be, unless you accomplish what you’ve undertaken.”

“ Then, you come along with me, will you ?”

“ Most certainly not.”

“ You won’t! Well, be it on your own head, then.”

And shaking his clenched fist, he plunged into the thick of the wood, as if quite reckless where he went.

It was now getting dusk, but the three friends being pretty good woodsmen, resolved to push on, and indeed there was no time to lose, as Nauvoo might be destroyed before morning. The road was wide and clear, and having provided themselves with a couple of links, which were among the commodities vended at the cabin, they had no apprehension of being benighted. But the shadows quickly grew deeper, and they had not gone far when Ernest, who was walking a pace or two in front, heard a sharp click, and a bullet whizzed past, close to his ear.

They all sprang simultaneously to the side of the road, but hardly in time to see the figure of a man disappear, like an evil shadow, in the thicket.

“Thankee for nothing!” said Blouser, who set down the shot as aimed at himself by his late antagonist.

“Och! the murderin’ tief!” cried Riley.

“ Is it peasants he takes us for, bad luck to him !”

Ernest made no remark, but something within him—a mysterious, unaccountable instinct—whispered that the shot came from Frost.

CHAPTER XIV.

NAUVOO.

THE wail of the city rose to Heaven. The flames shot up as from a volcano, throwing a bright, ruddy glare on the sky; miles off it was as light as noon, and all over the plain, wherever house or cabin stood, a beacon of fire marked the presence of the Avenger.

The three friends hurried on as fast as they could; but Blouser and Riley, already much fagged, were unable to keep up with Ernest, who, indeed, seemed to forget they were with him, and finally left them far behind. His only thought was of Jessie—whether she would be murdered, or perish

in the conflagration, before he could arrive to her assistance. He met stragglers flying from the city; some almost naked, others bleeding and half dead, but he never stopped to speak to them, to make any inquiry, or answer any question, but only tried to quicken his pace. Panting, breathless, he still pushed on; his hand pressed on his heart, his eye fixed on the blazing city. Now the smoke came rushing down in dense volumes; the air glowed like a furnace; shrieks, and cries, and shouts, the fire of musketry and pistols, the clash of arms, the roar of the flames, the groans of the dying, the galloping of horse, the rush of fugitives and combatants—all proclaimed that he had entered Nauvoo.

He stumbled, and fell prostrate on a heap of bodies; he plunged over the ankle in wet, and shuddered to think it was blood. But with the one fixed purpose

in his mind, he continued his way, regardless of the challenge of sentinels, the whizzing shot, the falling buildings, the blazing fragments, which met him at every step. Now he was in the midst of the city : the temple, the second Zion, which had aimed to eclipse the glory of Solomon, was a mighty heap of fire ; instead of the gate of heaven, it seemed, as it might be, the mouth of hell. The flames soared high up in expiation of the blasphemy, the crime, the horrible license, which had scarred its unhallowed floor. The exulting shouts of the militia, mingled with the ribald song and the hymn of praise, according to the character of the band, added to the terror of the scene. But Ernest scarcely cast a glance at the glowing pile, the uproar giving wings to his feet. He plunged into a dark opening—dark with smoke, though the crackling flames rose on either side ; and five or six militia-men, who

had caught sight of his retreating figure, dashed after him. A cry rose, but it was not from Ernest, who, as he flew along, heard the death-struggle close behind, but did not relax his pace. With his hands stretched out before him, as if to grope his way, yet proceeding at full speed, it was a wonder how he avoided every obstruction, keeping always in the mid-street. Presently he ran against two mobbers, coming from the opposite direction, and who, with a profane oath, demanded the Shibboleth, which he was unable to give, but with a sudden effort, he flung them aside, and before they regained their feet, he was gone. In an instant he reached an open space, enclosed by a circle of fire, and now he discovered that, in his distraction, he had taken a wrong turning, and must retrace his steps to the temple. Back accordingly he went, now grasping a pistol, ready, if attacked,

to defend himself to the last. The same sounds, the same hot, black smoke, rose everywhere around him, till the vapour grew light and fleecy under the lurid glare of the temple, and he reeled out, almost suffocated, into the great square. For a moment he could hardly breathe, and was stunned and bewildered. But quickly collecting himself, he set off again, and traversed another street. Here the incendiaries had not yet arrived, as the houses were still uninvaded by the conflagration, and the unresisting inhabitants, aroused from their beds by the uproar, were flying unmolested to the fields. A few rapid steps brought Ernest to Clinton's door, and after trying in vain to force it open, he knocked long and loud. There was no response, and reflecting that Jessie would be too much alarmed to open the door, he ran round the side of the house, and clambered over the wall,

hoping to gain ingress from the garden. At first he met with no better success, but a low window, which he was just able to reach, at length yielded to his efforts, and he made his way in.

It was pitch dark, but he groped from room to room, calling aloud to Jessie, and, to give her confidence, blended his own name with hers. One door, secured within, resisted his pressure, but only for an instant, when the object of his search stood before him.

“Jessie! you are here, then!” he cried, in his eagerness drawing her to him.

A frantic exclamation was the reply.

“Oh, Mr. Glynn!—oh, ERNEST!” she continued, in the terror and agitation of the moment scarcely knowing what she said.

“Yes, it is I,” answered Ernest; “but we must not linger—every instant renders retreat more hopeless. You must come away directly.”

But a stupor seemed to seize upon her, as if the uproar without, drawing nearer and nearer, made even his words fall unheeded, and she was sinking powerless on his arm, when, seeing her helplessness, he hurried her down stairs to the garden, intending to escape from the rear of the house. No other outlet, indeed, now remained, as a conflict was raging in the street, and if they showed themselves there, they would inevitably be butchered. With some difficulty Ernest raised her to the top of the wall, when a yell from the street announced that they were seen. But the increased peril gave the terrified girl nerve and energy. She sprang from the wall, leaving Ernest free to push on, while she kept close at his side; and soon he seized her hand and led her on. In a few minutes they reached a field and stood in the open country.

The fresh air came upon them like new

life, but they did not pause to inhale it. So anxious was Jessie to proceed, that though the roar of the conflagration might have tempted even Lot to look back, she never turned her head. Field after field was crossed before they ventured to stop ; then Ernest could not imagine where they were, or what direction to take, though the North Star, that unerring pilot, in some measure indicated his route. The ground became more rugged and difficult at every step, and at length they reached a stream, which a little examination showed to be a tributary of the Mississippi, traversing the whole country ; but, though it was knee-deep, Jessie waded across, and they gained the opposite side, a low bank, only to sink in a morass. Supported by Ernest, the jaded girl contrived to drag on a few steps, when they were again met by the water, which, taking a sharp sweep lower down, came up like a fresh stream. Ernest now began

to fear they had become entangled in one of those water-courses so frequent in America, where the branches intersect particular spots like a net. Such was indeed the case, and in less than half a mile they had to cross the stream six times.

And now they were in the wood, with the thick, interlacing foliage overhead, shutting out the sky and the stars, and mantling everything in darkness. Ernest, as soon as he discerned his situation, would have turned back, but it was already too late, and the step he thought to retrace led him further into the forest. The only course, therefore, was to remain where they were till morning; and, in fact, it was impossible to go on, for Jessie, who had hitherto evinced such perseverance, no longer dreading capture, lost her strength with her terror, and sank exhausted.

“You are completely worn out,” said Ernest, in a tone of sympathy. “But you

can lie down here in perfect safety. It will soon be daylight, and then we may find some cabin where you can obtain shelter."

"This will do very well, thank you," replied Jessie, "and when I have rested a little, I shall be glad to go on again. I am so sorry to be such a burden to you."

But Ernest assured her, as only he could, that she was none; and strove to make her position as supportable as circumstances would permit. Fatigue, however, rendered her indifferent to everything but repose, and though she sat up for a few minutes, peering into the darkness with her aching eyes, it was in a half-lethargy, which gradually deepened into sleep. Then Ernest took off his cloak, and laid it gently over her, while, with his arms crossed on his breast, he watched anxiously for the not distant morning.

CHAPTER XV.

JUDGE LYNCH.

DAY comes upon us in the woods with a cold grasp, albeit, as he looks us in the face, his glance is kindly and cheering. First a dim, obscure light steals around, just enough to show the darkness; then the gnarled stems of the trees loom up, like phantom sentinels, in shadowy outlines; then a silvery mist bursts through glade and copse and thicket, and we feel the virgin breath of morning.

Jessie still slept. The anxiety and apprehension which, for many weary nights, had kept sleep from her couch, the all-absorbing attachment which was the

cloud, yet had often been the solace of her life, the conflict of feeling which had so long agitated, harassed, and distracted her, now, in the presence of Ernest, all subsided, like the sea after a tempest. It might be but the treacherous lull in the midst of the whirlwind—calm, silent, still; but with the masterless, headstrong instincts gathering strength under the mask of repose for a new and more terrible outburst. Yet, in truth, the manly character of Ernest, the example of his moral elevation, had an effect on her own, and she rendered to his superior and stronger will the homage of the clairvoyante to the mesmerist. More especially since their last interview, when passion had for a moment overpowered her, she seemed to learn from him the duty of self-command and self-denial, and felt a consolation, when she had once entered on the task, in the practice of such discipline. His image, indeed, was still

enshrined in her heart—how could it be deposed? but it was as a monitor, as a guardian, as a guide; and, through the darkness of the present, Religion, like the Angel in the Sepulchre, announced a new and blessed covenant, which brought light, though not yet healing, on its wings.

The mist was still hanging about the trees when she awoke.

“How could you give me this?” she said to Ernest, reproachfully, observing the cloak he had thrown over her, “so much as you must have wanted it yourself! You never think of yourself!”

“You are not so used to camping out as I am,” answered Ernest, cheerfully. “But we shall both be the better for moving, if you are sufficiently rested; and, with this light, we may make our way along the side of the stream, and perhaps come to some road.”

“ I can go any distance now,” replied Jessie. And she rose at once.

But progress, in the way Ernest proposed, was no easy matter, as they were obliged to keep close to the edge of the water ; and the bank, besides being overgrown with rank grass, reaching to the waist, was a perfect quagmire. But they had not gone far, when Ernest discerned a dark mass peering through the mist, which he thought might prove to be some building, and advancing further, they came to a saw-mill, backed by a couple of cabins formed of logs, with creepers clustering over the front. Smoke was already assaying to rise from the wide primitive chimneys ; and a knock at the nearest door brought out the owner, an old lumberer, looking as rough and rugged as Orson.

“ We are lost in the wood,” said Ernest, rather disconcerted by this unpromising

figure. "If you will allow us to warm ourselves by your fire, and then set us in the way for Carthage, you will do us a great kindness, and I will gladly pay you for your trouble."

"Keep your money till it's axed for, stranger—that's my platform," replied the Satyr. "So you've been in the wood all night, han you?"

"Yes."

"Well, you airn from down West here, I reckon?"

"No, we're English."

"You? well!"—He dashed across the cabin to an inner door.—"Hi! Poll, Pru!—here airn two Britishers."

A visitor of any kind at the sawyer's hut was a *rara avis*; but the arrival of two Britishers was indeed an event, and the wife and daughter of the Satyr, forgetting everything in their curiosity, made their appearance in the front room,

in a lamentable state of *deshabille*. But the daughter, a perfect impersonation of the Nut-Brown Maid, well sustaining her name of Prudence, retreated on seeing Ernest, and contented herself with peeping round the inner door, jerking back her head, every now and then, when there was any risk of being observed. Her mother, on the other hand, no sooner caught sight of Jessie, than, touched by her deplorable appearance, she took her by the hand, and drew her into the cabin.

“ Well, there’s no doubtin’ you’n bin all night in the woods, lass,” she said, “ Come in to the fire win you. There you, Pru!—well, the wench ha’ got stract, I guess—you gin on the cocoa—you hear !”

That Pru heard, there could be little doubt, as on mention of her name, she instantly disappeared, nor could all the objurgations of her mother, nor the raillery

of the Satyr, whose authority seemed to carry still less weight, lure her from the inner den, where she could be heard pleading the presence of "The Britisher chap," as an excuse for her wilfulness. But Jessie was now seated comfortably by the fire, though the smoke, to which the capacious chimney afforded anything but a free outlet, proved rather disagreeable. A pot of odorous cocoa, with some rashers of bacon, and a loaf of home-made bread, none the less sweet for being composed of Indian corn, soon decked the table; and Ernest did ample justice to the fare. The tobacco-box, however, which his host presented as pertinaciously as Major Hornblower, he constantly declined,

The sawyer, though living within a dozen miles of the Mormon settlement, had heard nothing of the recent disturbance—so completely was he cut off by the forest from the haunts of men; and

Ernest, to avoid exciting any ill feeling, was careful to make no allusion to the fanatics. Indeed, the curiosity of the worthy couple was so exclusively directed to topics connected with England, that it would have been difficult, had he been inclined, to speak on any other subject; and the Satyr's wife was especially inquisitive in all that related to Queen Victoria, and the young royal family, whom, having seen them during his stay in London, Ernest was enabled to describe. The Satyr asked several questions about General Wellington, whom he considered to come about next to Washington, though old Hickory, he expected, would, if it came to a trial, be no long chalk behind.

Anxious to make the best of his way to Carthage, Ernest, as soon as Jessie was sufficiently rested, proposed to depart, when the sawyer announced his intention of putting-to his horse, and driving them

to the city. Accordingly they took leave of the hostess, as well as of Prudence, who, at this critical moment, was prevailed upon to come forward and shake hands; and then set forward for Carthage.

As they drew near the city, they met straggling parties of militia and gangs of mobbers, returning from the massacre of the previous night, the American Saint Bartholomew, in which, according to some accounts, twenty thousand Mormons had perished. The city itself was in an agitated state, and Ernest, though no longer expecting molestation, was glad to see Jessie safely lodged in an hotel, where he could leave her without apprehension, while he went in search of Blouser and Riley, about whom, as he had left them on their way to Nauvoo, he began to feel very uneasy.

Having bid adieu to the honest sawyer,

who gruffly refused all recompense for his hospitality and trouble, he was passing forth, when he came suddenly upon Frost, who, with too much reason, started back as he observed him, raising his eyes to his face with a searching look, in which hate and distrust were mingled with apprehension. At another time, this might have confirmed Ernest in his suspicion that the bailiff was the assassin of the forest, but from the report since made of him by Jessie, he was inclined to regard him more favourably, and now thought with Blouser that the shot had been fired by Campbell. He received him, therefore, with less hauteur than usual, which, of course, only rendered Frost more distrustful.

“ I have brought away Jessie Clinton,” he said, imagining that would be the bailiff’s first thought. “ She is here if you like to see her.”

“ And why shouldn’t I ? ” replied Frost, sulkily.

“ Nay, I know no reason. Have you been able to do anything in reference to her father ? ”

“ Perhaps I have. But as you wouldn’t help, there’s no good telling you.”

“ Very well,” rejoined Ernest ; and he was turning away, when, to his great satisfaction, he espied Blouser and Riley, the former of whom, overjoyed at the rencounter, immediately threw up his hat, at the same time crying out—“ Here we are again ! ”

“ And your honour’s safe and sound in wind and limb, like Mick O’Shaughnessy’s horse,” said Riley, with warmth, “ Och, sure, it was awful—awful ! Mr. Blouser and myself never thought to see you again, sir—that’s the truth ; and, poor gentleman, he’s been frettin’ his life out, about it.”

“ Riley, ditto,” said Blouser. “ Brick.”

“I should be stone if I were insensible of his kindness, or yours either,” replied Ernest. “But what are you going to do? If you remain here to-day, we may see this tragedy played out, and to-morrow we can start for New York together.”

“Port it is!” returned Blouser, hugging an imaginary helm to his hips.

Here Frost, who had gone into the hotel merely to exchange a few words with Jessie, reappeared.

“Enter Caliban,” muttered Blouser.

“She wants you to go with me,” said Frost to Ernest. “Will you, or won’t you?”

“For what purpose?” answered Ernest.

“Well, you’ll see, if you’re willin’. But here they come now—here they tumble up: nice-uns, airnt they?”

All followed the direction of his eye, and perceived, at the end of the street, a concourse of people approaching, in a com-

pact body, and without noise or tumult, as if resolutely bent on some settled purpose ; and Ernest instinctively felt that he was now in the presence of one of those irresistible assemblages, which in the remote parts of the States, usurp, often from necessity, the most terrible functions of the law. None but those who have witnessed such scenes can form any conception of the impression they produce—the sense of awe and doubt, the wild confusion of right and wrong, the quick beating of the heart, the hesitation, bewilderment, and indecision, which for the moment paralyze the strongest nerves. The avenging crowd are not like a mob, but have the appearance of an organized legion legally invested with the attributes they claim — as if the mantle of the judge, with its solemn, imposing associations, really rested upon them. It is true, many of the concourse now approaching,

fearing ulterior consequences, had their faces blackened, in order to avoid recognition, but the greater number sought no disguise, appearing boldly in the foremost ranks. Nor did well-known citizens scruple to join the throng, as it traversed the streets; while all, by their demeanour as it passed, gave the demonstration their tacit sanction.

It was no secret that the object of the Vigilants was to inflict summary justice on the Mormon prisoners—Joe Smith and his accomplices; and they bent their steps direct to the gaol. The space in front of the building was immediately choked up, and a formal summons to the gaoler, to deliver up his charge, receiving no answer, an attack was at once commenced.

The gaol was built in a square, with an open court in the middle; and the upper story, which was a recent addition, was

pierced by a row of windows, enframed by iron spikes. There was no entrance but a door, completely plated with iron, and so narrow that it would not admit more than two abreast. Every method was tried to break in this barrier, but without effect; and the ringleaders were debating what should be done, when a blacksmith appeared, and deliberately set to work to force the door. This was characteristic of all the proceedings, the great feature being the utter absence of hurry, uproar, or confusion, giving the most lawless act a strangely grave and imposing character.

Ernest, who had joined the throng as a spectator, now found himself close to the gaol-door, towards which he was impelled in the rush, without the possibility of extrication, and, after a vain effort to get free, he quietly resigned himself to the press. The door, though strongly barricaded, was at length broken

down, affording admittance to several resolute men, who, pushed on by those behind, speedily forced their way over the wreck within. But here they encountered an unexpected obstacle in the States' Marshal, who, though deserted by the gaoler, stood before them revolver in hand, determined to dispute the passage.

“Now I expect you're not comin' any further, citizens,” he said, “and as long as I can help it, you shan't—that's a fact. I'm only a single man standing here, but I represent the whole Union, and I'll do my duty by my country and the constitution: so if you want my life, take it, but you only go along here over my corpse.”

Nobody in America thinks of molesting the functionaries of the State, and the resolution of the Marshal, instead of exposing him to hostility, only excited respect. But the fixed purpose of the mob remained unshaken.

“Now you’ve done all you can, and it’s no use,” cried a ringleader: “so stand aside.” And there was a shout of approbation, amidst which the men in front, still impelled by the mass, made a dash forward, but were flung back by the Marshal, though one contrived to elude his grasp, and got past, disappearing up the passage. The interloper was Frost.

Ascending with rapid strides a flight of steps, with which he seemed familiar, he ran along an upper corridor to a door, the crazy lock of which yielded to his first assault. The three prisoners, who were no strangers to what was passing below, sprang up as he entered.

“I’ll have life for life,” cried Hiram, brandishing a bar of iron, which he had wrenched from the bedstead.

“I will plead with you, brother, as man to man,” said Joe, his face white as ashes. “Ha! Frost!”

The bailiff pounced upon Clinton.—“It’s you I want, old man,” he said, “Come along, for your life—without a word, or you’ll be torn to pieces where you stand. Come.” And he drew him towards the door.

“Oh! you’rn he—you!” cried Clinton, suddenly pushing him off. “You ’n goin’ to marry my girl, arn ’ee?”

“Are you mad?” exclaimed Frost. “I tell you, you’re a dead man, if you don’t come off with me at once, and—But now you hear ’em! It ’s too late.”

Footsteps indeed were heard on the stairs, and the two Smiths, who had just made for the door, rushed back in despair. But Hiram, more self-possessed than his brother, slammed-to the door, and blocked it up with the bedstead.

“You’ve only one chance now,” said Frost, still addressing Clinton. “There’s a ledge running along from the window—

if you can keep your footing, you may reach the top of the wall, and jump into the field. Now then."

With one blow of Hiram's bar, which he had caught up from the floor, he broke through the window, but while he was urging Clinton to pass forth, Joe and Hiram clambered up, and gained the ledge. Clinton, who would never have moved at the suggestion of Frost, seeing his prophet disappear, quickly followed, leaving Frost in the cell.

The ledge, which had formed the coping of the building when it consisted only of a basement story, and had been built in on the addition of the upper structure, afforded but a precarious footing, but when there is no alternative but death, men will boldly face difficulties which at another time would seem insuperable. Quaking with terror, his knees bending under him, his brain in a whirl, Joe Smith

yet contrived to keep his balance, and, perhaps, would have reached the wall, had there been time. But his enemies now poured into the court below. A terrific yell broke from a hundred voices, as the prophet was descried, and as many weapons belched forth their messages of death. As the smoke cleared away, the lifeless bodies of Hiram and Clinton were seen stretched in the court, but Joe, the aim of every rifle, was still on the ledge. But a ruddy stream was gushing from his temple; his tall form, pressed back against the wall, gave one sway forward; and he fell into the yard. With a wild shout, they gathered round him, and more than one rugged hand clutched at his stiffening limbs, as with a convulsive shudder, he faintly murmured the terrible words "O, LORD MY GOD."

Joe Smith was dead.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE RETURN.

CLARA MEREDITH was utterly unable to account for Ernest's sudden disappearance. At first, she supposed that, from some cause or another, his visits had been interrupted for a day or two, and that he would soon present himself as usual. But as day succeeded day, and no Ernest appeared, she began to fear that he might be ill, and, at her request, the Judge sent to make inquiries. Then it was discovered, to the Judge's great satisfaction, that the Englishman had relinquished his situation, and quitted New York, without leaving any intimation as to where he was going.

The first effect of this intelligence on Clara was to excite a feeling of resentment.

Such cavalier treatment seemed to her, in the peculiar circumstances of the case, not only an unworthy return for the kindly welcome Ernest had always received at her father's house—not only a slight on herself, but to evince, by implication, a sort of contempt for her country: the arrogant Saxon, from the elevation of his European pedigree, probably looked down with scorn on the parvenu citizens of the new world. All the woman, and all the patriot, fired at the supposition. She now reverted to his silent manifestations of devotion, paraded, as she thought, so adroitly and craftily, with mortification and shame, irritated at the reflection that she had been so deluded by the tricks of an impostor, who, she blushed to think, still found an advocate in her heart.

Yes, the kind, gentle, loving heart rose in opposition to her will, her pride, her petulance: it rode, a little ark, safe

amidst the turbulent deluge of passion and resentment, by which she might otherwise have been overwhelmed; and, as her angry feelings subsided, the bird of memory brought back more than one tender recollection, as an olive-branch of promise for the future.

Thus, as time sped on, she invented excuses for Ernest, in answer to the upbraidings of her judgment. She reflected that, in struggling to advance his fortune, he was liable to be called away suddenly at any moment, and, perhaps, had been so hurried, that he was unable to bid her farewell. But could he not have written? Was it not due to her, as a friend, apart from any other considerations (supposing such to exist), that he should say at least where he was going to, before he absented himself for so long a time? But probably he was not aware, on setting out, that his absence would be so protracted. It might be that

he had gone on some expedition, the object of which he could only communicate in person, and that, from causes yet to be disclosed, he deferred an explanation till his return. Perhaps, even now he was depending on her forbearance, her generosity, and her indulgent judgment, assured that, though appearances might tell against him, she would not condemn him unheard. . And some such thought—such hope—was indeed cherished by Ernest, as a miser might hoard his gold.

Yet with all her confidence in the Englishman—with all her apologies for his inattention, Clara could not but feel a woman's pique, if not something akin to jealousy, at his continued silence. It was in vain she tried to smother the feeling, as, despite her prepossessions, it gained strength every day. This, however, was not so prejudicial to his interests as might be imagined. If it placed him in a light

which he would have blushed to deserve, it still kept him constantly in her mind, in her thoughts,—perchance in her heart. Love, child as we depict him, is not killed by a stab ; and woman presses the rose to her bosom, though it may tear her with its thorn.

One thing connected with the event gave Clara satisfaction, if not consolation ; and that was the manner in which her cousin uniformly avoided referring to it. She felt grateful to him for his silence, which, well knowing his love, his sensitive feelings, and his lurking distrust of foreigners, she interpreted as the forbearance and magnanimity of a chivalrous rival. She judged his nature by her own, unconscious of the envy, hatred, and malice, the sordid stratum of clay, that leavened and envenomed it. True, he cast no stone ; but why, when Ernest was arraigned, did he steal away from the judge

without disclosing the facts? He was but too sensible of his treachery, though the aphorism of the poet, that in love and war everything is fair, hushed the accusing voice within—as if even in war we may pilfer the colours of an enemy, when we have mutually agreed on a truce!

But duplicity, with its fair outside, was for the moment triumphant, as it too often is; and Wilmore was received by Clara with so much kindness, and such an unaffected welcome, that he was perpetually rejoicing at Ernest's absence. He seemed to have gone back to old times, when Clara, in all her occupations and pleasures, had but one companion and one friend—himself! Instead of being touched by Ernest's generosity, he now brought himself to think of him with more rancour, as having, by his unwarranted intrusion, so long interrupted and deferred his happiness. He even began to suspect the

motives of his voluntary withdrawal, and to conceive that, while assuming an air of bravado and unconcern, Ernest had really been intimidated by his desperation: so difficult is it for a mind incapable of a lofty action, to understand the feelings which dictate it.

And now his life was one whirl of rapture. In Clara's presence time was as nothing; and the days scarcely dawned when they were gone—gone too soon, perhaps, for his peace. The period of his rival's banishment drew to a close, and he had not yet secured the prize. His love, the deep, absorbing passion of his soul, was yet untold, though it was evinced in his every look. And Clara must see, must be sensible, how completely she possessed his affections—nay, obviously regarded his suit with sympathy and favour, though, whenever he approached the subject, a perverse fate always raised some obstacle

to an explanation. But delay would now be fatal: the night had at length arrived, when the term conceded by Ernest would expire. On the morrow, his rival, if his passion were as sincere as his own, would again present himself, and then all his labour must be begun anew.

Opportunity seemed to sanction his purpose. The Judge, of whose countenance he was already secure, had gone to attend a political banquet; and the two cousins were alone.

It was a spring evening, mild, balmy, and genial, the air breathing a soft promise of summer. Clara, so beautiful, so radiant, in the first blush and bloom of womanhood, was the very impersonation of the season. The bright tints in her cheek were the opening rose-bud; the sweet, ruddy lips were the glowing blossom; the smooth and dazzling forehead was the morning sunshine; the soft, subdued

glance was the voluptuous twilight; the long silken lashes that fringed her eyes, like a delicate veil, were the shade of the verdant foliage.

“I am so glad to be alone with you to-night, Clara,” said Wilmore. “This is the anniversary of the last evening we were together before you sailed for England. Do you remember it?”

“Perfectly,” replied Clara, with a smile, which, however, partook somewhat of sadness. “That evening had associations I can never forget, and they affected me so much—involving as they did a separation from all I loved and valued, that even the prospect of visiting the old world, to which I had long looked forward, for the moment seemed a misfortune; and I began to cling more fondly to home.”

“Would you had never left it!”

“Your old prejudice. You fancy one can’t go to Europe without bringing back

some of its antiquated conventionalisms ; but surely you can hardly accuse me of such backsliding."

"No one can impute anything to you that is not proper and becoming ; but—"

"Nay, no but, if you please," cried Clara, interrupting him, while she looked up with an arch glance. "The first part of your speech might have been uttered at any court in Europe, and now I see you are coming back to plain America. You're going to say something not so complimentary."

"Not a word unpleasing to you—for worlds. As to the language of courts, you know I condemn it ; and the plainness of America—the plainness of her speech, and manners, and institutions, is what I admire and venerate. But it is no flattery, dear Clara, to say I believe you to be everything that is beautiful and good ; nor can it offend you, if I fear you have been

impressed more than you imagine—I won't say by the pomp and circumstance, but by the polish, if you will, of the old world. As you have just said, we republicans are plain—a little rough, perhaps; and ladies are more attracted by the easy air of the gallant."

"As much as to say, we look more to the casket than its contents," observed Clara, reproachfully.

"Then, I am unhappy at expressing myself; for that is not my meaning. But let me tell you, in words you can't mistake, what were my thoughts, my hopes, my ardent aspirations, on that sad evening, when we were to part for so long a time. Ah! don't turn away, dear Clara. You know what I told you then—how I loved you, how I should always love you, and live and die for you! Do you forget my words, my vows?"

"No," said Clara, agitated. "I remem-

ber well how kind you were to me—how sorry you were at my going away. But I was sorry, too, as you know. I was a child, and you were only a stripling, and we never sought to conceal our feelings. But that time is gone; let us think of it no more.”

“Oh! Clara, can you say that? Think of it no more? As easily might I forget my name, my being! I think of it day and night, every hour of my life! Let me tell you, dear Clara—tell you at your feet—”

“No, no, not now,” said Clara, in a tone of entreaty, and half rising.

“Now — now!” exclaimed Wilmore, distractedly. “I have waited long for this moment: to-morrow may be too late.”

“Not so, Alfred,” replied Clara, all her composure returning in a moment, while she laid her hand affectionately on his

arm : “ if you must tell me, let it be to-morrow.”

“ When HE is here !” cried the unhappy man, in a paroxysm of despair.

“ HE !”

“ Yes, the Englishman. Miserable that I am !”

“ Do you mean Mr. Glynn will be here to-morrow ?” said Clara, unable to repress her emotion. “ You are silent ! you are concealing something from me—yes, I see it in your face. He has written to you.”

“ No ! believe me he has not.”

“ Then how do you know he will be here to-morrow ?”

“ You will be angry at my not telling you before ! Do not frown, dear Clara, or you will kill me ! I considered it as almost a part of our compact.”

“ Compact !”

“ He engaged to be absent from New

York for six months ; and the time expires—

“ To-morrow ? ”

“ Strictly speaking, to-night,” said Wilmore, falteringly. “ But he will hardly come to-night.”—And he seemed to recoil at the thought.

“ Then it was late when you parted ? ” said Clara, her lips quivering.

“ Not so late ; it might be about this time. I remember it, for as he went out I heard the hour strike, and it was nine o’clock.”

As he spoke, a time-piece just behind where he stood began to strike, startling both himself and Clara. It was nine, and as the last stroke pealed forth, there was a loud ring at the bell.

“ It is he ! ” cried Wilmore, frantically.

“ For shame, Alfred,” exclaimed Clara, though her own heart fluttered. “ Why

will you indulge in such foolish anticipations! Be more composed—more yourself.”

But a step was heard in the passage; the door was thrown open; and, as the negro servant pronounced the familiar name, Ernest entered.

If he had been doubtful of his reception, a glance at Clara, as he advanced towards her, reassured him. At that moment all her resentment vanished. Still unable to account for his absence, sensible that some mystery was connected with it, she yet saw, whencesoever it had arisen, that the very instant the term fixed upon had expired his first thought was of her. This was an act of homage which her woman's heart knew well how to interpret; and, while it was his best plea for forgiveness, brought a flush of triumph to her cheek, such as it had not known since his departure.

“ You don’t ask me where I have been,” said Ernest, as they sat down.

“ No,” replied Clara. “ You will tell me, perhaps, some day.”

“ It is quite a history.”

“ And a mystery, too, it would seem.”

“ Let it remain so, then, if you are content.”

“ And if I am not content?”

“ Then, perhaps, your cousin will help me out,” said Ernest, with a glance at Wilmore.

“ Sir !” exclaimed Wilmore, in a freezing tone.

“ You have been so long away, Alfred has had time to forget all about you,” said Clara, resenting his abruptness. “ If you go off again in such a manner, you must not be surprised to see yourself advertised, something in this wise—Lost, stolen, or strayed, a young Englishman, of—let us see—how many feet?”

“Two,” said Ernest, with a glance at his boots.

“Of two feet, and of course the same number of hands,” rejoined Clara. “And we must say of gentlemanly appearance.”

“Appearances are often deceptive,” muttered Wilmore invidiously.

“No one can know that better than yourself,” remarked Ernest. “But this is the lesson of cities, and I have just come from a place where men speak as they think, and act as they speak.”

“And where is that Utopia?” asked Clara, smiling.

“In the backwoods.”

“Oh! you have been there, have you?”

“Yes, and I was presented to the sovereign of the country—a despot in his way.”

“You are thinking of your own country, sir,” said Wilmore, with an ironical smile. “Despots are unknown in America.”

“ Because the same thing is called a Judge here,” answered Ernest. “ You have heard of this one, I’m sure. His name is Lynch.”

“ I told you how it was,” said Wilmore to Clara, with an exulting glance. “ Mr. Glynn sees all things here in one light.”

Clara looked grave, but her father coming in at the moment, she made no reply.

CHAPTER XVII.

LOVE AND HONOUR.

THAT night, Ernest thought over his relations with Clara and her father long and seriously, as indeed he had often done before, but never in the same spirit, or from the same point of view. It now occurred to him that he ought not to visit at the Judge's house, except in his real character, as the suitor of Clara; or he might, at a future time, justly be accused of having sought to entrap her affections, while he was disguising his own—in fact, of pursuing in secret an object which he was ashamed and afraid to avow.

He had come back to her, after so long a separation, more infatuated than ever, inspired by the thought of seeing and meeting her again, of hearing the music of her voice, and beholding the light of her smile. If the anticipation had filled him with transport, how much had it been surpassed by the reality! He found her more beautiful, more fascinating, more enchanting, than imagination, in its wildest flight, had loved to picture her. As the divine harp of David stilled the evil spirit in Saul's breast, so the melody of her words, the spell of her beauty, threw a chain, as it were, over every dark feeling of his nature, and, under this influence, passion was linked in his bosom with innocence and truth. In her presence every moment brought its rapture; every thought was a fresh joy. And something still told him, as it had often done before, that she was not insensible of his attach-

ment, or indifferent to his devotion: that his love might be returned!

What a thought! what a hope! It thrilled through him, as if it fired at once his body and his spirit: he was animated, so to speak, by a new vitality; and his feet seemed to rise from the ground, as his soul from the earth.

Such was the dream by which he was entranced—the pursuit he was now to abandon; for, in effect, to disclose his attachment to the Judge, while he was without either position or fortune, would, he felt, be nothing less. But, if he valued his own self-respect, no other course was open to him. Clara was dearer to him than life, but honour must be more precious still; and it spoke to him now, as at every period of his life, in accents he could not disregard.

But how could he be sure that the Judge would prohibit his suit? Had he

not, from the very first, always treated him with the utmost kindness and consideration, though apprised by himself of the inferiority of his means? Was it not the main article of his political creed, that wealth conferred no dignity on its possessor, that it did not morally raise one above another, but that all men, rich and poor alike, were equal? Base, indeed, would he be, to repay the cordiality of such a nature, the ingenuousness and unsuspecting frankness of such noble principles, by entering the house of his friend with sinister pretensions, and, while he approached the father as a guest, appear in another character to the daughter.

Moreover, he did not seek the immediate, complete consummation of his happiness. All he asked was, not Clara's hand, but permission to solicit her love. Could he obtain that, he might, by renewed and unremitted diligence, soon

improve his position, and be able to offer her at least a respectable home. Meanwhile, he did not care for her fortune ; he could tell the Judge *that*—and, of course, the Judge, himself actuated by such enlightened sentiments, would give his assertion implicit credit.

The result of all these reflections was, that Ernest, on the following morning, found himself at the door of the Judge's mansion in a more composed frame of mind than might have been expected, considering the momentous errand on which he was bound ; and though his resolution faltered as he was ushered into the library, and found himself alone with the American magnate, it was only for a moment, when all his courage and decision revived.

There was something constrained in the Judge's manner, as he returned his salutation ; and, to say truth, so early and

formal a visit, taken in connexion with other circumstances, in some measure foreshadowed his object.

“I have thought it well to speak to you, sir, before I resume my visits at your house, on a subject of great importance to both of us,” said Ernest. “May I hope you will hear me with your accustomed indulgence, even though you may not approve of my views?”

The Judge inclined his head.

“I need hardly tell you, sir,” pursued Ernest, “that, since I have had the privilege of being admitted to your house, I have been constantly in the society of Miss Meredith; and to enjoy this happiness, and be insensible to her attractions, would, of course, be impossible. I will not conceal from you that I felt their influence immediately; and therefore, when you threw your doors open to me, I would not avail myself of your invitation till I had

acquainted you with my position and circumstances, that you might know who it was you received under your roof."

"I remember, sir," observed the Judge, stiffly. "Your conduct on that occasion won my confidence, which I hope I shall never have reason to regret."

Ernest bowed.—"Never, if I can help it, sir," he said, with emotion. "It is on this account that I have come to you this morning. I love Miss Meredith. I feel I cannot see her again without telling her so—that my happiness, my peace, my life are centred in her, and inseparable from her. I could not say this to her till I had first communicated it to you—till I had obtained your sanction to my addresses. You hear me, and are not angry—do not even upbraid or interrupt me."—His voice faltered, but he continued—"Oh, sir, is it possible you can approve of my suit?"

"No," replied the Judge, in a tone firm

but kind; "and you will, I am sure, see, on reflection, it is unreasonable to expect I should."

Ernest's head drooped.

"In the first place," continued the Judge, assuming his forensic air, "there is one objection to your proposal, which I am surprised a person of your discernment should have overlooked. Far be it from me to say anything which may give you pain, but does it not strike you that Miss Meredith, as heiress to a large fortune, can only be united to a person—I will not say of her own rank in life, (for rank I despise,) but of proportionate means? Wealth, in an artificial state of society, is one of the conditions of being, and, lightly as I hold it myself, it entails on us certain concessions to appearances, which are a part and parcel of its functions."

"I have always thought you considered wealth an evil, sir," said Ernest: "and,

indeed, this impression has made me more hopeful of obtaining your countenance. I was not ignorant of Miss Meredith's superiority to myself in point of fortune, as in everything else; but having frequently heard you lament the great inequality in the distribution of riches, and contend that all property ought to be held in common, I imagined you would not consider my humble circumstances a fatal objection, so long as I strove diligently to amend and improve them."

"I feel grateful to you, my young friend, for that reference to my opinions," answered the Judge. "If the world would be advised by me—if it would come back to first principles—then these social barriers would no longer exist. Can there be a stronger argument in favour of my views than this very case? Here are you, a young man whom every one must respect, with everything to recommend

you, and attached, as I verily believe, to my daughter, and what is the first obstacle to your success? Want of fortune! Can anything be more preposterous? Were it the want of an eye, of an arm, even of a tooth, I could understand it. But it is the want of base, sordid, worthless lucre. The world will not hear of your marrying Miss Meredith, because you have no fortune: take away her fortune, and you are equal: that is what it amounts to."

"Then, for Heaven's sake, take it away, sir," exclaimed Ernest, piteously.

"Eh!" cried the Judge, elevating his eyebrows.

"I say, keep her fortune, bury it, throw it to the winds," cried the despairing lover; "and give her to me penniless, if she will have me. Oh! what are riches—what all the honours of the world, if the heart is desolate, the mind seared, the affections blighted? You may double Miss

Meredith's fortune, but will that insure her happiness? And if you sell her into bondage, will it be any compensation that her bonds are gold."

"Precisely what I would say myself," observed the Judge. "This is a perfect illustration of what I have been all my life asserting."

"Then, assert it no more, sir," cried Ernest, bitterly, "or it may be said you denounce in others what you practice yourself."

"Not I, but the world," exclaimed the Judge, shrinking. "I tell you my sentiments candidly and unreservedly: I proclaim them to every one; but—"

"You don't act up to them," said Ernest. "Pardon me, if I seem to speak too boldly: it is not in anger, but in the sorrow and agony of my soul. I came to you strong in the great principles you profess; and you spurn me because I am

poor." His voice failed him, and he turned away, in despair.

"Stop," cried the Judge, touched alike by his emotion, and by his denunciation: "don't go away with the impression that it is solely on account of your circumstances I discountenance your addresses to Miss Meredith. I have indeed urged this reason in deference to the usages of the world, though in violence to my own feelings. But, to be frank with you, I have already accepted a proposal from my nephew Wilmore, and he is now pleading his own cause with my daughter."

"Let him plead!" said Ernest, passionately. "Not for worlds would I interfere with his suit; but if it fails—if it is rejected—then, at least, permit me to urge mine."

At this moment, Wilmore, supposing the Judge to be alone, entered the room. He started on seeing Ernest, but in-

stantly his eye gleamed with malicious triumph.

“You have succeeded, then?” cried Ernest, his brain on fire. “Oh!” he exclaimed, in an imploring tone, to the Judge: “let me but say how I love her—how I adore her; and I quit your house for ever.”

“It cannot be!” replied the Judge, though with a glance of indecision at his nephew.

“He won’t do what she requires;” murmured Wilmore. And he added aloud—“Mr. Glynn has a claim to what he requests: he can hear Miss Meredith’s decision from her own lips.”

“Come, then,” said the Judge to Ernest. “You have acted like a man of honour: you shall be treated as one.” And he led the way to the drawing-room.

Clara was seated on a couch, her head bowed upon her hand, and so absorbed in

reverie, that Ernest, parting with the Judge at the door, entered unheeded.

Her appearance confirmed his fears : he now saw, what he had dreaded before, that she had given herself to his rival, and that he stood there a lost and blasted man. But a sudden impulse seized him ; and throwing himself at her feet, he clasped her hand, and pressed it to his lips.

She seemed to know he could not speak ; and though she turned away, it was with such gentleness, such reluctance, that it was more a response than a repulse.

“ Will your hear me, Clara ? ” he said, at length. “ May I tell you how I love you ? how I have loved from the moment I first heard your voice, before I was sensible of your perfections ? ” — He looked up at her, and she did not now avert her face, but it was grave and sad.

“ I have come too late ! ” exclaimed Er-

nest, in a tone of anguish, as he sat down beside her. "You may hear me, but can't be mine—for you no longer have power to choose!"

"You love me, then?" said Clara.

"With all my heart and life and soul!"

"But you know there is a barrier to our union?"

"Too well!" exclaimed Ernest, distractedly. "Would the devotion of a life could remove it!"

"Its removal rests with yourself."

"With me!" cried Ernest, with sudden rapture. "Oh, Clara! do I hear aright? Only tell me what the obstacle is, and it shall no longer exist."

"It need not indeed, if you are sincere," answered Clara, tenderly; "but I have made a vow that I will never give my hand to any one but an American citizen; you are qualified to become one, and can take out your certificate of citizen-

ship when you please. You shrink! Is this your love?"

"Oh! Clara, what do you ask of me?"

"That you should swear allegiance to my country."

"And renounce that I owe to my own. Do you forget this is especially mentioned in the oath?"

"Ah, now I see it is true," exclaimed Clara. "Your love is the fancy of the moment, which has no real existence. How can I confide in your affection for me, if you have none for my country?"

"But I *have*, Clara. I admire and commend your country. I rejoice at its noble aspirations, its mighty destiny; only my heart clings to England — my native land, with the feeling of a child for its parent."

"An unnatural parent, who denies her children bread!" said Clara, with bitterness.

“ Yet the tie of nature remains,” returned Ernest. “ Can you wish me to rend it ?”

“ If you don’t, you have come here for an unworthy object—to amass wealth, that you may return to spend it in England. England casts you out—America receives you; and you repay her hospitality by desertion. This may be loyalty to your own country, but is it not treason to mine ?”

“ Treason is a hard word. I visited America for a purpose which may be honestly sought in any part of the world—to improve my fortune; and I owe no obligation to the land I reside in beyond present obedience to her laws. America has afforded me a home, but England gives the same welcome to Americans, and not to them only, but to all the nations of the earth. There, every one comes and goes without hindrance or inquiry, and nobody

interferes with either their principles or their religion. Would you establish such restrictions in America, where freedom is the national boast?"

"Those who seek our shores for their own interest should be bound to remain—not press the juice from the fruit, and then throw away the husk. If you loved me as you say"—and tears gathered in her eyes—"you would not seek to tear me from my home!"

"Never—never could I do you such a wrong!" cried Ernest, passionately. "No, if you will share my humble prospects, Clara—if you will bless my life with your presence, here we will live and die. Where you are is my country—my world. Dwell where we may—in the forest, in the wilderness, if you are there I shall think it a paradise."

"Then you consent?" said Clara, with a look of exquisite tenderness.

“Never to quit America,” exclaimed Ernest.

Clara drew back. “This is not it!” she said; “I ask you to enrol yourself an American citizen.”

Ernest buried his face in his hands.

“You will not say yes. Cruel!—can you love me?”

“Better than life!” exclaimed Ernest.

“But not better than England!” said Clara.

Ernest was silent.

A wild paroxysm seemed to seize upon Clara, as if all the evil impulses of her nature, combining in an irresistible effort, had, for the moment, mastered the good, throwing a shadow over her beauty like a cloud over the sun. With her hand pressed on her bosom, as though she would still the waves of passion that raged within, she stood silent for an instant, lost in the chaos of tumultuous thoughts that whirled

through her brain. But the spirit of destiny was upon her; the words rose to her lips like fire, and they burst forth uncontrolled.

“Ernest, I ask you for the last time, will you become a citizen of the republic? Assent will be a proof of your love for me—is a condition of our union. Speak, or let us for the future be strangers.”

“Oh! Clara, listen to me! For pity’s sake—for your own——”

“You won’t!” cried the excited girl. “Then, go—leave me! I will not hear you—not a word, not a syllable. Go—for ever!”

He gave her one look—a look of stone, without light, without reason—and the next moment he was in the street.

He had not passed out unseen. Wilmore, too uneasy to remain aloof, was watching for the termination of his interview, and saw what had been its result.

As the door closed on his rival, he was again at Clara's side.

"My Clara, my life, in tears!" he exclaimed. "Tell me who has offended you, and you shall be avenged. But I know who it is—this braggart Englishman, who has come here to destroy the peace of our household, to blast our happiness, and to mock at our country!"

"To mock?" said Clara; and her whole frame seemed to dilate.

"Yes; his every word, his every look was a taunt and sneer at us. I have told you so all along. And now you have heard it from his own lips, for he has rejected the test you proposed—spurned it, though offered by your hand."

Clara's face kindled.

"Do you imagine this man could love you, Clara?" continued Wilmore, with renewed vehemence. "What could you ask of me that I would refuse? And you will

let this stranger, this would-be aristocrat, triumph over me—set his foot upon me, and not only on me, but on yourself!”

“He is not likely to do that,” said Clara, with a bitter scornful smile.

“He will do it in imagination,” returned Wilmore. And another Tempter, her own poor human heart, was beguiling her within. “And I, what a fate is mine!—loving, admiring, yet for ever made miserable.”

“I pity you, dear Alfred.”

“Say you love me, Clara. You must—in your soul, you must.”—And he twined his arm round her, and gazed in her pale face.—“Oh! would you see me mad, dead?”

“Horrible!” cried Clara, shuddering.

“I tell you even madness would be a relief, if you drive me from you!” exclaimed Wilmore. “Much more, since I see you insulted and humiliated—” Clara

gave a start—"for a slight to your country is, with your known feelings on this point, a slight to yourself. Ah, Clara! I implore you, by all you hold sacred and good—by our early association, our early love, not to give me over to despair, but accept me for your husband, as I have always been your companion, and so vindicate and avenge yourself, while you bless me."

She did not reply, but his arm still encircled her; and, though he drew her closer to him, she made no effort to free herself.

"Oh! tell me you will be mine!" he said, beseechingly. "You consent!—you consent!"

"Yes!" was the scarcely audible answer.

HIS! what a delusion! Was, then, the petulant dictate of pique, the suggestion of offended vanity, the pitiful vexation of

a moment, a credible witness to her affections and aspirations? Was it with such ministers she took counsel on so solemn, so binding, so irrevocable a covenant? Alas! how do we abuse the gifts with which Providence has endowed us! The very feelings designed for our happiness, the susceptibilities given for our enjoyment, are perverted into afflictions, and, through their instrumentality, we involve others in the suffering we deliberately bring on ourselves. We may triumph, but it is at a cost far greater than Pyrrhus. There is a stab in our brother's heart, but if we look inward, we shall see our own robed, like the penitent of ancient times, in the grave-clothes of remorse, shrinking from the torch of conscience, as a phantom from the light of day. Better defeat than such a victory—a defeat self-inflicted, which is a victory over ourselves.

But Clara thought otherwise. She had never been taught, as a principle of republican discipline, that woman's greatest triumph is submission, that sacrifice should be the unvarying rule of her life. She forgot the unalterable decision of nature, and of nature's God, that for this cause—for love—in obedience to the overruling instinct of passion and affection—a woman shall forsake her kindred and her father's house, and shall cleave unto the one chosen. Ruth, in the land of Judah, a voluntary exile from her home, is a greater heroine than the Spartan mother. Not that woman should root from memory the sweet impress of nativity! But did the daughters of Zion forget Jerusalem, when they sat down by the waters of Babylon and wept?

Such reflections never occurred to Clara. To her, love of country, as embodied in certain arbitrary opinions,

seemed the first duty, as she certainly conceived it to be the greatest. But in truth, it was now associated with other and less worthy feelings—with pique, jealousy, resentment, wounded pride. Patriotism, indeed, was the band round her eyes, but these were the treacherous guides, who hurried her over the precipice.

And she would not pause to think! All she loved to dwell upon was his refusal, his deliberate rejection of her request. To her, bent as she was upon it, this was like a refusal of herself; and Wilmore took care to strengthen and foster the impression. Here was the canker that had eaten its way into her love—marring, withering, and blighting it; here, the plague spot of her thoughts, the monster incubus of her dreams!

But the day had now arrived which was to end this terrible conflict. With a composed look, with a firm step—but with a

heart how troubled!--she approached the altar, and heard the impressive words of the solemn and imposing ceremony. She heard, and spoke, as the responses were whispered in her ear, but she neither saw nor understood—only felt as in a fearful trance, from which she would awake to horror and despair.

And now she was a wife! They hurried her away, her hand in HIS—in her husband's, down the nave, through the admiring and applauding crowd, still looking calm and placid, but within, heart-stricken, desolate, distracted, mad! The sumptuous chariot, which received her at the church-door, seemed a prison, a sepulchre; with an atmosphere so oppressive, so sickening, that she could not breathe.

Wilmore let down the sash, and she bent slightly forward, eliciting a shout of gratulation from the crowd. But she

neither heard the cheer, nor observed the multitude. To her eye there was only one present—one unseen but by herself—ERNEST! and, uttering a cry, she sank back in the carriage.

END OF VOL. II.

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